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## GLOBAL CHURCH - GLOBAL JUSTICE

Documentation from the Meeting  
of the  
Council of the Lutheran World Federation

*13-23 September 1992, Madras, India*



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## INTRODUCTION

Meeting in Madras, India, September 13-23, 1992, the Council of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) addressed the theme: "Justice in Humanitarian Aid and Development." Presentations and discussions on this theme deepened and enriched the work of the Council, generously hosted by the United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India.

In its statement, the Council affirms the centrality of justice in all dimensions of life and therefore requests that all programs and projects planned and carried out by the LWF, its member churches and partners reflect this commitment.

Addressing the theological concept of justification, LWF president, Dr. Gottfried Brakemeier states that justification and world responsibility today are closely related, but opinions vary on how to proceed from the Gospel to social responsibility or from the justice of God to justice in the world.

Dr. M. M. Thomas, a well-known Indian social development expert and former moderator of the World Council of Churches, delivered the keynote address in which he expressed the opinion that "justice is where koinonia, sharing and fellowship, begins." Concern for justice in development should be social and cultural and needs an anthropological perspective which is spiritually sensitive to the inner stirrings of peoples searching for their self-identity in a modern setting. The prime changing agents for social justice are the nongovernmental organizations, which should involve participation of marginalized people who have the right to organize themselves and struggle to secure some welfare measures for a tolerable human life.

To make these important papers known to a wider public, this Documentation includes the main addresses and the Council's statement on the theme together with the General Secretary's Report entitled "Building Communion - Overcoming Isolation" which gives an overview of the work of the LWF and encourages the churches to come from isolation to communion.

A Panel for Financial Strategies has over the past year aimed at finding means for "financing a world communion." Its report and the Council's statements, resolutions and messages to the churches complete the list of the major documents of the gathering.

These documents are published with the hope that they encourage and inspire discussion in the churches and strengthen their witness and service to the world.

*Anneli Janhonen  
Director  
Office for Communication Services*

November 1992  
Geneva, Switzerland



## JUSTIFICATION IN AN UNJUST WORLD

*Address of Dr. Gottfried Brakemeier, LWF president*

### Introduction

This year the Council of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) meets under the theme "Justice in Humanitarian Aid and Development." This wording is quite symptomatic since it expresses the crisis situation of "world service" to which the communion of Lutheran churches has always been deeply committed. What does humanitarian aid mean today? Traditional charity is no longer able to stop the proliferation of emergency situations worldwide. Resources are shrinking, one's breath gets short. Moreover, we need to examine what type of development we are aiming at and what is justifiable in view of the limited resources of our planet - an issue that played a prominent role at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) meeting in Rio (de Janeiro, Brazil). It continues to be on our agenda.

The real challenge of the theme however is the concept of "justice." Unlike any other, it focuses on aspects that are decisive for the survival of humankind. Injustice increasingly provokes dangerous conflicts, polarizes poverty and wealth and is a factor of considerable environmental destruction. This has become so clear in the meantime that no proof needs to be provided. Justice is not the only problem today but probably the most important one that the conciliar process initiated by the World Council of Churches on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation suggests. The choice of this theme places the LWF once again within this movement as from the perspective of justice it critically reflects on its tasks, given today's circumstances. As important as world service remains, it is powerless to deal with injustice. Something very basic needs to be changed. The long-lasting peaceful coexistence of human beings, groups and peoples presupposes just behavior and just structures.

In making this demand does the church do something that does not belong to its mandate? For Christians, an individual ethical commitment to justice is self-evident. What happens however when justice is a demand addressed to social structures and especially areas such as the economy, trade and education? To what extent does the church have to advocate civil justice among human beings?

On the basis of such questions, it was quite obvious to choose the theme of "God's justice/righteousness."<sup>1</sup> As we all know, this concept contains the gospel truth of the justification of the sinner (cf. Rom. 1:17). Martin Luther became a reformer when he discovered that God's righteousness does not mean the righteousness with which he punishes human beings but, rather, that which he bestows on human beings as a gift. God is righteous by his justifying (Rom. 3:26) and he does so by grace, and on the basis of faith. What kind of righteousness is it? What has the righteousness mentioned in the gospel to do with the struggle for justice in society?

This question has a long history. Let me just remind you of the consultation of North and South American theologians held in Mexico City from 7 - 14 December 1985 on the theme "Justification and Justice" and of the international consultation held from 9 - 12 September 1991 in Neuendettelsau (Germany) on "Rechtfertigung und Weltverantwortung" [Justification and Responsibility for the World]. Beyond that, the theme has always been present in theology. Nevertheless, no common findings are in sight. Views differ concerning the question of how you derive social responsibility from the gospel or, in other words, how you reach justice in the world starting from God's righteousness.

<sup>1</sup> Translator's note: The German term "Gerechtigkeit" has two operative equivalents in English, "justice" and "righteousness."



Perhaps one reason might be the fact that the relevance of the justification message seems to be dwindling in the late twentieth century. Has Luther's question of a gracious God become obsolete? Lutheranism continues to stress the central significance of justification and considers it to include the whole gospel. This is properly stressed in the Lutheran ecumenical dialogues. But, strangely enough, the theological centrality does not seem to go hand in hand with practical topicality. Although I do not believe that the message of justification is being forgotten within the LWF and within Protestantism at large, we have to agree that there is a certain "modern aphasia with regard to justification." Can the message of justification still fill people with enthusiasm, to change the world and to set into motion another urgently needed reformation? To what extent is justification the answer to the yearning for justice in our world?

What I can offer here is no more than a meditation. Far be it from me to settle what, with regard to justification, the Fourth Assembly of the LWF held in Helsinki in 1963 left unsettled. I do not want to make a scholarly contribution to the biblical and dogmatic understanding of God's righteousness nor to tackle the many controversial issues still open in spite of large consensuses. Of course the meditation is based on a concept. To what extent it holds will need to be examined. But I would like to draw your attention to the question of the significance of the message today. What does justification mean today within the dynamics of faith and action? I am grateful for ideas from other sides. In my reflections I do not intend to offer anything new even though they might uncover unfamiliar connections.

With regard to method, please note that my point of departure is not the doctrine of justification. An inductive procedure seems to be more appropriate. I am not beginning with the dogma, not even with the church's proclamation in order to go on to ask how they could be "applied." I will proceed the other way round and ask where justification occurs in real life. Only then will I deal with the justification event as attested to by Jesus Christ. As a last step, dogmatic and above all ethical consequences will be considered. Justification - what does it mean, what happens and what does it commit us to?

### Need for Justification in Society

One would be closing one's eyes to reality if one were to overlook the cruel compulsory need to justify oneself that every human being seems to be afflicted with in one way or another. Although the intensity and the form of this compulsion differ it remains the same global phenomenon. Each society demands justification.

What is meant is not so much the justification of claims made, positions taken and actions accomplished. This is simply assumed. Nobody is permitted arbitrariness or given free license. Human beings are accountable for their acts, deeds and words. Of course, this is an integral part of the compulsory need for justification I mentioned above. But not in the first place. If I see things rightly, this compulsion has dwindled almost to nothing in a pluralist society which guarantees freedom of opinion and religion and emphasizes the rights of individuals. Society has largely abandoned its moral control function and has capitulated to individualism. Where the state usurps the role of society, and by violating basic human rights installs a totalitarian regime, things are different. Yet we can leave out of account dictatorship because it is, as such, immoral. In any case democracy protects freedom; it is by its very nature tolerant. Nevertheless, this does not mean that individuals give up their responsibility; on the contrary, its necessity must be affirmed. It is precisely in democracy that one has publicly to give account. Democracy requires ethical principles and a legal system based on them that cannot be qualified as "cruel."

The compulsory need to justify oneself in the proper sense is something else. It is manifest whenever a person is forced to justify not something, but him/herself, his/her existence, his/her presence. You have to prove your right to life. My place in society must be fought for, my claim to consumption be accounted for, my value as a person needs proof. This is something typically human. Plants and animals do not need justification. Their right to life is given by creation itself. In spite of the fight for survival in nature there is no question of meaning. Each living creature, even the most inconspicuous, the plainest or the most repulsive, fulfills a positive purpose and



contributes to maintaining life. This is not so where human beings are concerned. Their creatureliness is obviously not enough to justify their existence. A feeling of lack of dignity, incapacity or culpable failure leads them to a crisis that needs absolutely to be overcome if life is to succeed.

What is a human being? What justifies his/her life and guarantees social rank?

I suggest three answers:

1. The value of human beings is measured by their **purchasing power**. Lucrative customers are wooed. Where markets beckon, investments are made. To the "haves" the world is open, since almost everything has a price. Nothing provides justification more easily and with fewer problems than capital. The value of money is transferred to those who own it. Hence, as long as the prodigal son had money, he suffered no identity scruples. But penniless he was worthless and landed with the pigs. What are the poor of the earth worth, those who have nothing with which they might ensure commerce, business and profit?
2. The value of human beings is measured by their **membership in a group**. There is a difference whether I am white or black, man or woman, friend or foe. Racism assumes the superiority of one race over another, and the same is true for other groups and parties. Not least of all ethnic categories come into play. In America for instance the following was held true: All Native Americans are evil. Hence they can be eradicated. We are the good ones. This is how murder begins. It is the most acute form of a denial of justification. But discrimination, hatred, exclusion from the community are also part of it. Group membership guarantees privileges. Insiders are accepted whereas outsiders become the victims of oppression, persecution and even annihilation.
3. The value of human beings is measured by **achievement**. The greater the knowledge, competence, or ability, the greater one's merits and prestige. Achievement is in great demand, it is rewarded and promoted. Even children at school are pressured to produce good results, something that will be continued in the professional and even the private sphere. Productive capacity has a magic ring to it. Growth rates are needed everywhere. Of course, many drop out of this mad rat race: the sick, the old, the weak. This is the price one has to pay, which is obviously considered normal. Justified are only the strong, the capable, the intelligent, in short, those who can point to success.

Looking at these criteria that determine whether somebody is justified or not, achievement will be given priority. As important as purchasing power might be, it first needs to be acquired through honest or unfortunately also dishonest ventures. This is the underlying premise. At least in part group evaluation also is based on the achievement category. It is claimed that such and such a group performs better than another even if there is no proof for it. Thus distinguishing between criteria I merely wish to draw your attention to the fact that whatever establishes the human being's value and the right to life does not necessarily have to be actually produced. It can be merely a claimed or supposed achievement. Be that as it may, the primary principle of justification in society is that of efficiency. The New Testament speaks about the law of works.

This law is so effective because basically it is the only one from which claims can be derived convincingly. There is a wish to make privileges seem deserved and thus legitimate. In order for this to be so, one needs the approval of third persons. This is no different in small groups or in the public realm. I depend on the opinion of others, the credentials they give are my warrant to the right to life, work, income, protection, dignity and freedom. The image, one's good reputation, good marks, are decisive for advancement and quality of life. To accomplish this, achievement needs to be manifest. And so there is much fear of failure.

There is, it is true, the possibility to force recognition through the use of violence. In this case, one becomes one's own judge and appropriates the rights otherwise withheld. Intimidation pushes the others into the role of "yes" sayers or impotent spectators. Rule by force is the peak of self-gratification, the wish to be free of anyone else's opinion, thus dodging responsibility.



However, each dictatorship suffers from the problem of legitimacy and for this reason sooner or later arrives at a crisis. Justification thus continues to be a social occurrence which is based on agreement or refusal and which succeeds only in the case of acceptance.

No society can do without achievement. To provide everyone with what he/she needs is a demand of justice, and without production there is no consumption.

But the absolutization of the efficiency principle has adverse consequences:

1. It leads to mental problems. Competition that sets in early in life produces stress and loneliness, promotes inferiority complexes, reduces the *joie de vivre*. The fear of not being able to live up to demands and not to be able to keep up with it all sometimes takes dramatic forms and increases depressions and suicidal tendencies. Never before have there been so many mentally ill as today. Justification on the basis of works reduces the quality of life.
2. A society fixated on achievement shows no mercy. Those who have stumbled once are unlikely to get up again. The guilty must pay. This is true in moral and in material terms. For that which today is considered to be sin, forgiveness is the exception. Achievement excludes mercy.
3. The exclusive status of achievement strengthens social contrasts. Since production requires means that can be monopolized, the equality of opportunity becomes an illusion. Technology, education, capital, property, determine production to a much greater extent than good will and personal effort. Although economic, political and military powers make use of the efficiency principle as legitimization, they undermine it at the same time by making it impossible for others to furnish proof of the same efficiency. This is how unjust structures and conditions come into existence. The underprivileged are prevented from the same performance or else their performance is not measured by the same yardstick. International price politics are a good example. Why are the wages for equal work so much lower in the South than in the North? Performance-oriented societies increasingly produce inequality.
4. And finally the question arises of whether the idolization of achievement does not contribute to the destruction of the environment. Unlimited growth is impossible without large-scale ecological damage. What does efficiency mean in a world whose limits become increasingly manifest?

The only thing that remains of the delusion of achievement, is the arrogance of those who are at the top, those who have made it. What remains is the hypocrisy of those who pretend they belong and who try to capitalize on the semblance of right. What remains finally is the despair of those that were run over and must watch how they as the superfluous, the poor and exploited can survive. In view of the danger inherent in masses of the impoverished, force is the last resort. This in turn perpetuates unjust conditions and gives rise to dangerous social conflict that at some time will explode with murderous consequences.

Of course the picture I have drawn is an incomplete one. One must not generalize either. It is necessary to verify in each case to what extent it is true. But it seems to me that the justification mechanisms in society need greater attention. Only against this background will the depth of the gospel message of justification make complete sense.

It is true that not only the Christian faith but any form of humanism must oppose the trend of reducing human beings to the level of a machine which is thrown on the scrap heap the moment it stops functioning. Human beings have an intrinsic value. This is the basis on which human rights are founded. There is a type of humanism at work in society that resists the brutality of a purely functional view of human beings and to which the Christian faith has deep affinity. Both, humanism and Christianity, are committed to the aim of creating a more humane world. Nevertheless, from a Christian perspective, the question needs to be raised whether humanism has not itself,



perhaps, promoted a type of performance-oriented thinking. Both Immanuel Kant's idealism and Karl Marx's materialism are agreed that it belongs to human dignity that one creates oneself through work. Free human beings owe themselves to themselves. The ideal is a human being who does not owe anything to anybody, and is thus autonomous and subject to no rule. At this point, the difference to the Christian faith becomes manifest. What does justification mean from the perspective of the gospel?

### God's Right to Mercy

According to the gospel, God justifies human beings "apart from works prescribed by the law," solely by faith (Rom. 3:28 and *passim*). If I am correct, then this sentence is one of the greatest provocations in history:

1. To begin with, it raises a question of principle, namely which instance is ultimately authorized to grant the right to life. Is it myself, is it a group, is it society as such or is it God? It is erroneous to think that the message of justification presupposes faith in God. On the contrary, it actually raises the question of God in all its urgency. Who is entitled to decide on the human being's right to life? From whom do I myself derive my life?

If it is God who justifies, I become free from societal opinions and constraints. Although they continue to exist they can no longer claim to have ultimate validity. It is God who decides on the value or its absence of human beings, not just anybody, not even the general public. This however means that society is being disenfranchised, something that society does not like all that much. Human beings are deprived of their control over others. The justifying God is a societal scandalon and for this very reason liberation for all those who suffer discrimination and condemnation.

2. The gospel turns the current popular criteria for justification upside down. God justifies out of pure mercy without considering merit and worthiness. Because he loves his creatures, achievement does not enter into account. Those who think themselves able to influence God with works mistake their own creatureliness and have illusions about their own possibilities. Human beings owe their existence to God's grace. This means that arrogance and conceit are shattered. At the same time, human beings are given the highest possible dignity: God declares them to be his children. Self-praise stops and is replaced by gratitude praising and commending God for his bounty.
3. Where does this certainty come from? It comes from the experiences of the people of Israel with its God. Above all it comes from Jesus Christ, who affirmed this God and in whose name he knew he was sent. His words and deeds were justification solely by grace. It is true that it is Paul who for the first time formulated something like a doctrine of justification. But it originates in Jesus and is grounded in his life, his death and his resurrection. The kingdom of God proclaimed by Jesus and made manifest through anticipatory signs is nothing but the revelation of God's justifying mercy.

Jesus justifies by calling sinners into his community, forgiving them their trespasses and making them his disciples. He justifies by turning to the poor, appeasing their hunger and praising their beatitude. He justifies by healing the sick, touching the impure, freeing people from obsessions. To justify means to save lives, to restore dignity, to annul guilt. Jesus did not ask whether people deserved it and thus he incurred the wrath of the "righteous." Because of his justification, Jesus suffered death. Sin nailed him to the cross. He bore it, surrendered himself to it and "was raised for our justification" (Rom. 4:25).

4. The anthropological concept that speaks through this practice is both sobering and encouraging. God exclusively justifies sinners or, in Paul's words, "the ungodly" (Rom. 4:5), those



who do not deserve it. The reason for his help is mercy, nothing else. This means in turn that in Christ all people are justified. For who could be excluded on good grounds? Any limitation to a particular group takes away from the gratuity of justification. For this very reason, the gospel says that "God so loved the world" (Jn. 3:16), i.e., the whole creation that Christ "came to seek out and to save the lost" (Lk. 19:10), that he died for us while we were still sinners (Rom. 5:6f). In Christ the world is justified as God was reconciling the world to himself (2 Cor 5:19). The exclusiveness of grace includes its universality.

At the same time, the breach that has occurred between God and human beings is taken seriously. The relationship to God is disturbed and this must be overcome. Human beings can no longer derive the right to life directly from their creatureliness. A new liberating act of God becomes necessary, i.e., justification out of pure mercy.

Once this is recognized the human image is flawless. Of course, human beings are capable of performing good and moral deeds. But still they remain trespassers before God and their neighbors. The justification through God does away with the need to cling to the illusion that human beings are good and unable to do evil. Nobody needs to be idealized, neither the poor nor the indigenous people, neither children nor women nor anyone. Idealizing persons opens a backdoor that leads directly back to meritocratic thinking and annuls the exclusiveness of grace. Human beings must be seen realistically. Although there are better and not so good people and though evil appears in many different guises, nobody can claim to be without guilt. It is a fact that human beings are sinners. Nevertheless they are loved by God. They can be reminded of their responsibility, be taken seriously as God's partner, and their accomplishments are appreciated. In turn, human failure, human weakness, human faults and flaws need not be covered up. "Beggars we are and that is true" (Martin Luther). Everyone depends on mercy.

5. God's mercy manifest in Christ must be believed. This is not the *conditio sine qua non* for justification, but its consequence. God does not make his action dependent on our agreement. Faith means seizing justification, clinging to it, life in the new God-given dignity. Justification is more than an abstract theory. It is a practical truth that for this reason needs to be lived out in concrete terms. This has a number of implications:

- It places my relationship to God on a new foundation. God becomes relevant as he who accords me my right to life even against the odds of societal refusal. He makes me "righteous." That is to say he sets right my relations to himself by forgiving my trespasses and recognizing me again as his son or daughter. Who takes this seriously must rejoice and praise God. The gospel not only gives us a new lease on life, it also provides a reason for and a certain freedom to life. It teaches trust in God and respect of his will. In every respect, a new worship sets in with justification.
- The new relationship to God is inconceivable without a new relationship of human beings to themselves. I have to accept myself, which often means hard work. I must find my identity, discover some meaning in life. Is this possible without grounding existence in a transcendent reality? Which is the solid foundation in my life, the deepest conviction, the ultimately valid hope? The modern term of self-realization merely points to the problem rather than solving it. In biblical terms, only those who have received life as a gift and thus are prepared to give it away will experience a fulfilled life. Who am I in the first place? According to the gospel of justification, I am more than an arbitrary part of a large machine, more than the victim of untoward circumstances, more than a consumer in pursuit of a little happiness.
- Since God justifies not only me but the whole creation, my relationship to creation is changed. I will see human beings and nature from the perspective of God's love. God's



mercy to me becomes an experience that determines my life as well as an ethical obligation. God's justification opens our eyes to what is wonderful and mysterious in this world. It teaches awe and modesty. It includes us in the community of those who confess that they owe their lives to God's grace bringing salvation to all (Tit. 2:11) and thus are committed to making room for mercy in this world. Justification not only gives rise to a justified person, rather, it gives rise to a justified community whose faith is active in love.

6. But justification sets norms even for those who do not believe. Human beings are forbidden to destroy the life to which God directs his love. Justification provides life with a sanctity that must not be violated with impunity. God has the right to be merciful and to give also to the undeserving. This is what is so pertinently said in the parable of the laborers in the vineyard (Mt. 20:1ff.). God's righteousness is his right to show mercy that must be recognized and respected by all. It is quite clear that there is a bridge from here to what we call human rights.

There is a last aspect to be taken into account. Justification happened in Jesus Christ. It must be proclaimed as valid today. And yet the ultimate justification is not yet - just as ultimate life is still a matter of hope. Justification at the end of times means resurrection. This will be when God's mercy will say: "[E]nter into the joy of your master" (Mt. 25:23). It is the eschatological dimension of justification. It teaches us how to recognize the temporariness of all earthly things. But the justification that is in Jesus Christ carries the promise of justification at the end of times. For the criterion God uses when he sits in judgment is the same in each case. Both here and in the future, life will only exist as God's undeserved gift which we owe to his mercy.

### Justice as God's Commandment

Since the collapse of the socialist systems in eastern Europe, the ideological contest has ended spectacularly. Capitalism seems to have been victorious throughout and appears to have been established as the new world power. A number of voices speak of the end of utopias. Does this mean that the striving for a better, more humane society has to be given up and that we have to accept the brutal struggle of interests as a reality?

This would be tragic, for two reasons:

The first is purely practical. Humanity cannot continue as it has done up to now. It must be restructured, must pursue different aims, rethink its value system. New forms of global coexistence are required. The neoliberalism taking root everywhere leads into a cul-de-sac. It creates more and more inequality and thus dangerous conflicts. It abuses law as an instrument of power while power should be in the service of law. The demand for justice probably has never been as urgent as today. Nothing was more convincingly shown by UNCED in Rio.

Moreover the gospel message of justification also requires efforts for justice. It has already been shown that it contains an ethical obligation or, rather, that such an obligation follows from it. But it is important to recognize that this obligation is not limited to individual behavior. Justification that has become an event in Jesus Christ aims at a just, sustainable world. I shall try to explain what I mean in what follows:

1. When speaking of social justice, we obviously do not think of the righteousness before God which has been given to human beings by grace. It is advisable not to confuse matters. As has been shown, the Bible has its own concept of righteousness. Those who are righteous before God have the right relationship to him, live as children of God and respect their fellow human beings as brothers and sisters. Justice/righteousness is a relational term that for this reason is apt to express mercy, love, forgiveness. God is righteous by setting right our relationship with him, by saving and liberating lives. From this perspective, our world is most certainly profoundly lost, for religious and human relations are not in order. The message of justification



holds court over the injustice in our world and it is a call for the redirection of our social conduct.

2. Even though the biblical righteousness may be very near to mercy, this does not mean that we can do without achievement. Distributive and punitive justice that looks for merits is well known in the Bible. Justification by grace does not invalidate judgment by works. Nobody has a claim to mercy. It remains a miracle. Only a court can pronounce grace and at that as an "exception." Once it becomes a right, human responsibility is invalidated. This puts an end to all ethics. The message of justification does not annul the principle of performance but relativizes it. What constitutes the value of human beings is not in the first place their achievement, but the quality God invests them with. Thus there will never be absolute equality among human beings. There must be room for individual development and rewards for deserving acts. But inequality will be kept within bounds, since mercy predominantly is directed toward the feeble and the underprivileged in order to integrate them into the community or at least to ensure that they remain part of it.
3. The God-given right to life must be publicly recognized. Even unbelievers are not allowed arbitrariness. The notion of "life that is not worth living," which has its - albeit unofficial - adherents, must be branded as criminal. It legitimates violence and marginalization. What is behind the murder of street children, blacks or one's own foe, to cite just these examples, is a cynical attitude. According to the gospel we must say: What God has justified must be holy for human beings. We need a world that takes life seriously and respects it as a gift which is not at our free disposal.
4. This makes "civil justice" relevant also for the faith. It is no specifically Christian demand, but has its place within the framework of every philosophical and religious ethics. Justice is to give everyone what is theirs and at the same time it aims at leveling off the differences. This means the adequate distribution of existing resources, equal pay for equal work, protection of legitimate rights, criminal prosecution, the creation of law and order, and the implementation of generally valid international law. Although such justice is not all that is required for peaceful human coexistence, it is one of the essential requirements if social organization is to be successful. Love thus cannot do without it. Injustice is a disease that kills life and brings society to the verge of collapse. Love "does not rejoice in wrongdoing" (1 Cor. 13:6). To be fulfilled it needs the alliance with justice.
5. This alliance, it is true, will not be free from tensions. For love needs more than formal justice. The justifying God is free to make a gift, something that would not be possible on the basis of mere justice. He forgives sins and gives humans subsistence for free. I refer you once more to the parable of the laborers in the vineyard (Mt. 20:1ff.): The landowner does not owe those anything who have worked for twelve hours. But in his bounty he has the right to give, even though there is no necessity. Justification demands justice, although it goes beyond it, just as mercy always wants more than an appropriate reward.
6. We have to go one step further and say that justice remains truly human only against the background of justification by mercy. Without a supporting humane anthropology behind it, justice is cold and not immune against cruelty. It becomes formalistic, "legalistic" and incapable of adequately defining law. Only mercy has eyes for the rights that God has given in equal measure to the weak and the strong. Only mercy will be in a position to advocate for the disenfranchised, to denounce the misuse of the law for purposes of revenge, and to remind us of the need for forgiveness. Justice that claims to be humane depends on a merciful concept of human beings.

What follows from this? Certainly not the obligation to develop and follow a "Christian utopia" should we by this mean a perfect society. Eschatological fulfillment cannot be forced and any attempt in this direction ends in theocratic claims and eventually in bitter disappointment. Confusing God's two kingdoms has never paid off.



On the other hand, the imperative to work for a just world cannot be denied on the basis of the gospel. Without justice, love is mere sentimentality. It will bring about little change, and peace in society will remain a far distant goal. Love will not only require talk of justice, it will have to figure out what a just world could look like. Insofar utopian ideas are by no means unknown, but they must not be confused with God's kingdom. We lack concepts for a better, more just society. We need "leitmotifs" for a future form of society that raises hope and promises existential possibilities for all. Like love justice also needs imagination. But this is not a matter of high-handedly anticipating eschatological expectations but of assuming ethical responsibility. A just society - what would it look like?

But it is not only justice that is at stake. What is at stake is "God's righteousness", i.e., justification on the basis of mercy. Whereas justice requires law, justification requires life. There is a difference. In view of the hatred and the indifference, in view of immeasurable guilt in the past and at present, in view of the brutality of an ever more desperate struggle for survival, the cry for mercy becomes louder and louder. Where is there mercy in this world? Another vision of humanity and another "eco-image" are necessary to overcome the dangers that confront humanity. The message of justification is very exciting in its topicality.

From such a comprehensive perspective, ethical neutrality shows itself to be a fiction. Even though the claim can justly be made that the areas of technology, economy, politics, science and others are autonomous, ethical responsibility must not be ignored. Dealing with the debt crisis of the Third World countries reminds us more and more of the story of Cain and Abel. National selfishness and group interests prevent urgently needed global reforms. The inability to share endangers life. Justification gives life. But it is a life that can be gambled away in the case that the ruling bureaucracies believe they are accountable to no one. Justification through God is gospel that needs to be demonstrated in the service of justice and mercy (Rom. 6:13).



## BUILDING COMMUNION - OVERCOMING ISOLATION

*Report of Dr. Gunnar Stålsett, LWF general secretary*

Let me begin my report by words of appreciation to our host, the United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India. The careful preparation, the outpouring of prayers in our Indian member churches for this global gathering and the warm welcome fill us with joy and expectations. Like many global travelers before us, from Saint Thomas, the Apostle, to missionaries like Ziegenbalg and Plütschau, Skrefsrud and Børresen, we wish to be seen as servants of the gospel of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. We come as guests with respect and humility to India, the world's largest democracy, a continent of its own, but not an isolated island in Asia or the world. The multi-ethnic, multi-religious culture of this great land represents in a unique way the complexity and promise of Asia and fills us with awe for its tasks and respect for its achievements.

We honor the great leaders of this nation who took it out of colonial bondage and led it on a yet unfinished search for freedom and justice for all. And we are here to learn from the Christian churches and communities about their role in sharing the gospel with the hundreds of millions of faithfuls of other religions in a spirit of vibrant apostolic faith, dialogue and ecumenism.

We are here to listen to the experiences our member churches in India have made on the often arduous road toward greater Lutheran unity as a contribution to the visible unity of all Christians. We want to pay tribute to one of the champions of this search for unity in the mission of the church, Dr. Kunchala Rajaratnam. Also in the life of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) your voice and your work have called us, critiqued us and kept us on the way.

We greet all of you Indian and Asian brothers and sisters in Christ, as well as our ecumenical guests from other regions honoring us with your presence. We greet you in the name of Jesus Christ and pray that his name be glorified through our meeting here in Madras.

"No man is an island, entire of himself." (Today we would replace "man" by "person.") This sentence from a Christian poet of the early seventeenth century expresses a basic instinct of the human being for togetherness, relationships and community. The poem is a timely reminder of the interrelatedness of person to person, family to family, tribe to tribe, nation to nation, and continent to continent. Our search for relationship does not always give the result we are aiming at. Columbus set out to sail to India and "discovered" the Americas. In today's world the search for ethnic togetherness is in some areas leading to the abomination of "ethnic cleansing." Instead of being marked by a search for a common European House, a part of Europe has turned into a gruesome battleground reminiscent of bygone centuries. Nations are disintegrating at a greater pace than can be counteracted by any uniting movement. The situation in former Yugoslavia is demonic.

If we look only at countries in which the LWF has member churches, this year has been dramatic. In 1992 a new day of peace dawned on the long-suffering people of El Salvador. In Eritrea more than thirty years of struggle for nationhood and independence are bearing fruit. On the ruins of Mengistu's Marxist dictatorship, Ethiopia is still in a situation of political uncertainty. The continued plight of the people who suffered under civil war in Liberia is largely forgotten by the world. In Madagascar a new republic emerges as a result of a peaceful process not least due to the role of the churches. The Republic of South Africa has not yet achieved the goal of nonracial democracy. The peace process in the Middle East has reached a more promising phase for both our Palestinian and Israeli brothers and sisters. The voice and concern of the Lutheran churches worldwide have been expressed in these lands both by the local churches and by the LWF as we accompany the member churches in their mission of reconciliation and peacemaking.

In this year of 1992 it has also been brought home to the world that humanity has no future in isolating itself from nature. The Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, has made it abundantly clear that a person is no island in the cosmos. Ecology, economy and oikumene are related words,



they also point to the interconnection of creature and creation and their common place under the design and authority of the Creator. Nor is a person an island in the perspective of time. Humanity is being forced by its own greed and over-exploitation to come to terms with a finite world. We stand today under the judgment of God and of future generations whose life is at stake because of our over-consumption. And yet there continue to exist not small islands but continent-sized archipelagoes of poverty, hunger, underdevelopment and untold human suffering. The dream of the new economic world order has vanished from the international political scene. Now this is a mere sketch of the political and human backdrop against which we have come together from all continents to consult and make decisions to strengthen the unity and mission of the churches of the Lutheran World Federation.

### **How Does Staff Report to the Council?**

Before I move into the substance and theme of this report, let me recall the way in which staff reports to the Council. All Council members and advisers have received the reports of the assistant general secretaries as well as the directors as part of the agenda. These reports deal in greater detail with the work of departments and units and suggest new steps to be taken. Their content is designed to inform the general debate of the Council and to give background for the programmatic review and development of new proposals in the program committees. As the reports from the program committees come to the plenary another opportunity is provided for all the members of the Council, regardless to which program committee they belong, to assess the work in a more holistic manner and to give policy directions for the work of the Secretariat. The general secretary's report which it is my privilege to present to you, is an attempt to provide an overview and synopsis of our work, building on the reports of our competent colleagues, and to raise issues which might be central in moving the LWF ahead in fulfilling the mandate of our constitution and the programmatic directions of our last Assembly. The report of the general secretary is developed in consultation with the cabinet and other colleagues in order to reflect as far as possible a common vision of your Secretariat. In all these reports you will sense a commitment to a deeper and wider growth of communion. However, the fullness of our work together can only be seen as you take the time to study all documents before you. Only then can justice be done to the hard-working staff in each department and unit.

### **Annual Report to Member Churches**

I must confess that I have been reluctant in raising the following point with you, namely the question of an "annual report" to member churches. This is prescribed in the structure report and we should, therefore, discuss how it is implemented. Up to the present time it has been understood that the minutes from the annual meeting of the Executive Committee, now Council, in fact constitute such a report. With the exhibits, such as the address of the president, reports of the general secretary and the directors as well as possible statements, it could in a formal way be seen to meet the requirements. We need to ask, however, how this way of reporting functions in our member churches? Is this the best way to inform the churches about our work and life together? An alternative could be a small annual report (twenty to thirty pages) highlighting the work and presenting it in a style and form which is both substantial, factual and reader friendly. It should be said from the outset that we would have to issue such a report in the languages generally used in our organization, namely English, German, French and Spanish. Such a project, if agreed upon by the Council, would have to be implemented within our financial means. An annual report of this nature might reduce cost in staff time and production of the seven-year report to the Assembly as such a report could then be given a different format. Would not such an LWF annual report to its member churches serve to strengthen communication and contribute to the weaving together of member churches?



## Restructuring Completed

This meeting in Madras is our third full Council meeting since the Eighth Assembly and an appropriate time to review our accomplishments since 1990.

If we speak of accomplishments in the area of structure and management, we do so fully conscious of the fact that restructuring is an ongoing process. Good management is to meet the demands of the day and prepare for new challenges tomorrow. Thus any organization should ideally be "a dynamic creature" which grows in insight and efficiency also when it is forced to "down-size."

Within the Geneva Secretariat restructuring has been completed. All elements of the new structure are in place and functioning. The intentions of the new structure are well within reach: unity of purpose between the various departments and units, coordination and cooperation. The financial reduction of the administrative budget has exceeded the expectations of the structure report. As all key positions are filled or about to be filled we are gathering momentum in pursuing the programs and projects authorized by the decision-making bodies. Financial limitations have made it impossible, however, to establish the maximum staffing of 105 as set in the structure report, and in view of the prospects for the next few years it is unrealistic to believe that we can achieve that goal.

## All Cabinet Positions Filled

With the full complement of cabinet positions filled since our meeting last year in Chicago, USA, a sense of normalcy has been attained. Key functions are now the responsibility of permanent rather than interim position holders. In the General Secretariat, Ms. Christine Grumm from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has already functioned for half a year in the new position of "deputy general secretary" with special responsibility for planning. She brings in relevant and valuable experience, not only from professional administrative work in a secular non-profit organization, but also from church leadership as vice-president of a large member church and as a member of this Council. The mandate of that office is crucial in moving the Secretariat, programs and projects ahead in a dynamic and concerted effort toward the next Assembly. Ms. Grumm will be reporting to you on the process of planning, which is a key element in her job, as well as on Assembly review, constitutional matters and membership.

With the arrival of the new director of finance and administration, Friedrich Manske (Evangelical Church in the Rhineland), we have a colleague with broad professional experience in finance, administration and church relations. His expertise is beginning to show in our relationship to member churches and related agencies in this vital area of our life as an organization. Together with his predecessor Walter Schultz, he has accompanied the special panel on finance, which offers sound financial guidance to the organization and member churches for the years ahead. The chairperson of the special panel, the Reverend Horst Becker, will present the report to the Council. Horst Becker and all members of the panel deserve great appreciation for their contribution toward a more viable and steady financial future for the LWF.

In the Office for Communication Services, the new director and editor-in-chief, Ms. Anneli Janhonen from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland had to concern herself immediately with a number of day-to-day issues. The main challenge is to implement our information strategy, shaped by increased communication awareness in the member churches, a more acute sense of information and interpretation needs of the organization, and its commitment to service the mass media in a more adequate way through an Ecumenical News Service. Ms. Janhonen's background as head of the information service of her church adds special competence and sensitivity to the office at a time marked by greater expectations and less funds.

The Department for Theology and Studies is gradually developing its approach to integrate theological reflection in all aspects of the work of the organization under the leadership of Dr. Viggo Mortensen from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark. This department makes a crucial



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contribution toward renewing the life and witness of the Lutheran churches in interpreting the relevance of the Reformation heritage for our times - faith alone - Christ alone - the Scripture alone (*sola fide - solus Christus - sola Scriptura*). Within the Secretariat in Geneva there are expectations that theological reflections permeate all our work.

### **Other Staff Changes**

Since our last meeting in Chicago we have welcomed new co-workers in several other program positions: Bernhardur Gudmundsson, Evangelical Lutheran Church - The National Church of Iceland; Anita Stauffer, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; Agneta Ucko, Church of Sweden; Silvio Schneider, Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil; Hance Mwakabana, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania; Thomas Batong, Lutheran Church in the Philippines; Olli-Pekka Lassila, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland; Colette Bouka-Coula, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon, and Carol Birkland, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Receiving new co-workers means that a turnover takes place: After distinguished service of over nineteen years the associate general secretary, Dr. Anza Lema, retired this year. Likewise the competent and dedicated service of Norman Hjelm, Götz Planer-Friedrich, Paul Rajashekar, David Bramley, Menkir Esayas, Conny Sjöberg, Saturo Kishii, Radoslav Danko, Bram Voets, Sibusiso Bengu, Pentti J. Haapiseva and Michel Rosset came to conclusion since our last meeting.

The substantial turnover of staff, partly caused by the restructuring and a reduction in personnel office staff has placed an extraordinary burden on the Office for Personnel. It is necessary that in the coming year this office be fully and adequately staffed to discharge its personnel management functions with regard to the ninety-six staff members in Geneva and ninety-two field staff in twenty-two overseas locations. The new director, Mr. Claus Dölling, who brings with him many years of experience and professional competence, and his highly qualified colleagues in the personnel office are working beyond the call of duty to cope with the many and varied personnel issues.

### **Greater Flexibility in Employment**

A healthy turnover in program staff belongs to the intended features of the LWF as an international church organization. The first period of contract has been changed from three to four years with subsequent periods of three years. An average term of service of seven years for program staff in the Geneva Secretariat should provide a good possibility to make the best contribution to international church life and to achieve a good rotation of representation of member churches in Geneva. The field programs of the LWF operate with contracts for a two-year period. Here too, interest in employment from personnel in LWF member churches and related agencies is increasing. This also applies to support staff. The time has come to initiate discussion on different staffing models and policies with a view to better interaction with member churches and greater flexibility. Especially, when specialists are needed for shorter periods, different types of contracts may be needed in the future.

### **Quota and Competence**

The LWF Executive Committee in its capacity as Personnel Committee of the LWF adopted the revised personnel policies last year. As a consequence a new set of personnel regulations is being drafted for my authorization later this year. A new constitution of the Staff Representative Council is in preparation adjusting this important document to the new situation and with a view to enhancing participation and transparency in staff matters without abrogating the final administrative responsibility of the general secretary. The report of the director for personnel offers further details and statistics, including the happy note that in terms of program staff in Geneva, the LWF has reached the quota of at least 40 percent of each gender based on "competence first" - an



achievement which is unparalleled among international organizations and, to my knowledge, in our member churches. This has enriched our daily work in Geneva through a great variety of gifts and skills. I hope that the LWF by this recruitment policy, based on competence first, may set an example to other church organizations and secretariats both internationally and in our member churches.

### Review and Adjustments of Committees

On the basis of this comprehensive reporting, staff looks to you, members of the Council and advisers, to take responsibility for the shaping of policies and giving directions on our journey toward the next Assembly. But we should also take time to assess how the procedure and working style we have developed since Curitiba is functioning.

Caused by changes in Council membership, a moderate change in composition of some program committees is being proposed at this meeting upon consultation with the persons involved. Also a much needed increase in the number of advisers will be considered to further enhance the work of some program committees and thereby the Council's work. Such review and adjustments should be seen as a natural way of seeking the optimal function of the Council in its own work, its relation to member churches and related agencies. I see this as an ongoing process which must be undertaken with care both in regard to function and representation and finance. The Project Committee which has such a vital function in the life of many member churches is still seeking the optimal way of handling a great number of projects without becoming so much entangled in details that a discussion of overall strategy is neglected. There is also a need for fine tuning in the area of responsibility of the Program Committee for Communication Services in relation to the mandate of the Program Committee for Mission and Development.

The Program Committee for Finance and Administration is the only committee to which no adviser has yet been appointed. Given the crucial importance of this committee, it would be helpful to supply it with a broader base for its reflections and proposals. Hence the proposal at this meeting to appoint two advisers to this committee.

### Bylaws

At its meeting in Chicago last year, the Council adopted bylaws to the new constitution. Bylaws become effective one year after their adoption, unless objection has been filed with the Council by at least one-third of the member churches. I am pleased to inform you that no member church has opposed the acceptance of the bylaws. This reflects a broad consensus within our constituency on the interpretation and implementation of the new constitution. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (ELCF) in accepting the bylaws comments, however, that it would have preferred a statement in the bylaws that a church's own doctrinal basis must be consistent with the doctrinal basis of the LWF, this "because of the fact that the member churches are in communion with each other and form a Lutheran Communion."

In the discussion up to now on this point, including the discussion during our Council meeting in Chicago last year, the view has prevailed that "consistent with" does not demand identical wording, and that in accepting a church for membership the LWF must base itself on a declaration from the church itself to the effect that its doctrinal basis is consistent with that of the LWF as expressed in its constitution. The valid concern expressed by the ELCF is therefore met when a church accepts the LWF Constitution.

### Finances

The report of the treasurer and the director of the Office for Finance and Administration bears out that with the excellent cooperation of all staff it has been possible to meet the Council's demand for a further reduction in staff and administrative costs.



Last year in Chicago you instructed the general secretary to reduce the proposed budget by SFr. 708,700. The reduction amounted in fact to SFr. 1,182,700 which was accomplished by, *inter alia*, delaying staff appointments. The Executive Committee in February this year demanded further reductions of SFr. 226,000 which means that the budget for 1992 is SFr. 1,408,700 under the Chicago proposal. Several factors contribute to this exceptional achievement, the most important ones are a strict budget discipline and a readiness by staff to look for cost reductions including the acceptance of a reduced cost-of-living allowance.

If the Council therefore wants to express its appreciation for the financial performance of the Secretariat, the director of the office for finance and administration and all program and support staff should be given due recognition. **It must, however, be emphatically stated that we have now exhausted the means of cost reduction which can be applied without moving into program areas.** With almost all staff positions filled, there is less room for maneuvering in 1993 than this year. The dramatic weakening of the US dollar and continued inflation which threaten the financial equilibrium of the present "A Budget" are matters beyond our control. If I nevertheless share with you a sense of confidence it is because of the competence and readiness of our staff to meet new challenges and the recognition in our member churches that we are serious in our budget discipline.

As I have mentioned earlier in this report, the report of the Panel on Financial Strategies will be discussed at this meeting and will offer a good basis for long-term financial strategies which are owned and supported by all member churches.

### Overcoming Isolation - A New Perspective on Our Work

Great attention to the internal structures, staffing, finances and so on, has been necessary to assure the optimal functioning of the Secretariat in Geneva which exists "to assist in implementing, facilitating, and making concrete the communion which now characterizes the relationships between member churches" (Report on LWF Restructuring III. 4, Minutes of 1989 LWF Executive Committee meeting, Exhibit 17). At this meeting of the Council we will begin to let our perspective be influenced by the close of the millennium. This will certainly impact the next Assembly in 1997 which also celebrates the 50th anniversary of the LWF as a joint instrument of witness and service for the Lutheran churches in the world. In setting our eyes on the horizon of the Ninth Assembly, the time has come to turn our preoccupation from the Secretariat, its structures, programs and projects, to the relationship between member churches. The key question is now how the communion which we are committed to is bodied forth in concrete terms, **visibly** between the Lutheran churches of the world as part of the church universal.

Let me not be misunderstood at this point. I am not saying that I believe that the communion of Lutheran churches can function without the organization of the LWF with its structure, Secretariat, programs, etc. My point is to press beyond a preoccupation with the organizational framework to the joint life of the member churches for which all this exists. In the picture of the church as a body, the organizational factors are like the skeleton keeping the body upright and moving in a coordinated and dynamic way. The skeleton, however necessary it is, is not the body, is not life itself.

It is therefore imperative that we now exercise all our theological and leadership skills to draw the LWF member churches closer to each other. The test of the LWF as a communion is not the strength of the relationship the member churches enjoy with the Secretariat in Geneva, important as that may be--the communion is tested by the growth in day-to-day practical relationships at all levels between member churches. This is what Geneva needs to foster and facilitate: a new pattern of relationships between the churches of the LWF. Let me sharpen the issue before us by underlining that the call to realize communion is a call to break out of isolation.

Allow me to elaborate this point. Many churches and congregations are imprisoned, insular and isolated by their own choice. They do not really see the need for relating at a deeper and more



costly level to other churches. They feel self-sufficient in their affluence. Like the churches in the Book of Revelation they say they are rich, but in fact they are poor (Rev. 2:9).

Other churches are isolated through their total identification with the ethnic and national identity of their location. In this self-inflicted isolation they are not able to transcend strife and civil wars. Rather they become a major factor in providing a holy mantle and giving sacred justification for violence. For others again the isolation is dictated by a hostile environment. This is the case for some minority churches not only in Muslim fundamentalist countries but also where other religions prevail. The future of Christian churches in the Jewish state of Israel is thus a matter of continued concern. The tide has turned with the demise of most Marxist regimes which used to limit religious freedom, oppressing or heavily controlling the churches. But there are still churches held hostage to state ideologies and policies which limit their full expression of faith in mission, evangelization, Christian education and service.

As civil wars, internal social conflicts, poverty and hunger are shaping the life of many of our member churches these churches "under the cross" are perhaps more eager than any to overcome the isolation they suffer and to champion a biblically inspired life of communion. Incidentally, the sympathy and support which they have been enjoying during years of war, often vanish with the dawn of liberty, at the crucial time when the churches are called to make their contribution to build a new nation based on freedom with justice. Then these churches experience a new sense of isolation which belies the biblical concept of communion just as much as does the separation of one church from the other.

### Curitiba Revisited

Building a vital communion and overcoming a destructive isolation means that the LWF needs to become more intentional in its way of relating to member churches. We are duty bound to urge our member churches to implement such commitments as have been agreed upon by their representatives in the Assembly in Curitiba. There we repeatedly said: "We commit ourselves and our member churches, we urge our member churches." There we spoke of a clear plan of action with respect to equality of men and women within the life of the church. We committed ourselves to undertake consultations and, in cooperation with all member churches, to accelerate efforts and to equip people for witness and dialogue. This is the language we used: to call the churches to promote, advocate, to pressure, encourage, support, establish, call for struggle, call public attention to, demand, give material support and prayers. This list of active verbs indicates that the LWF and its member churches have been given a great responsibility for which we shall render account.

The new vision of the relationships which ought to prevail between the member churches of the LWF was the stated goal of the LWF Structure Committee as it began its work. The point of orientation was the observation that these churches are in "pulpit and altar fellowship," and the implicit consequence that these churches together seek faithful expressions of full communion in all aspects of life and witness (Report on LWF Restructuring, I.1, *loc. cit.*).

The committee began its work by looking for basic assumptions already embedded in the history and life of the federation as it sought to develop new patterns of relationship between the churches of the LWF. In identifying principles for structure the committee made the following affirmations:

- There should be a clear emphasis on **churches**.
- Among the member churches an inescapable **interdependence and mutuality** is called for.
- This mutuality and interdependence should be expressed through a process where member churches freely **share**, give and receive these **resources**.
- This vision of communion between member churches summons us to a **deeper integrity in our relationship**.



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- The decision-making process within the LWF must involve all the member churches (*ibid.*, III. 15ff).

In other words, the legacy which is ours to implement in the work of the Council and to account for at the next Assembly is: A new vision, faithfully expressed in all aspects of life and witness, new patterns of relationships, interdependence and mutuality, freely sharing resources, a deeper integrity in our relationships and decision making which involves all member churches. This sets our agenda up to the next Assembly. The Message of the Curitiba Assembly added emphasis by stating:

As churches we are bound to one another in faith, mission and service. Yet we are deeply aware that our communion is not complete: we do not everywhere have that visible unity between our churches to which we are summoned; full inclusiveness - between women, men, youth, lay, ordained, regions, cultures - remains a goal. (Curitiba Message, Preamble, LWF Report 28/29, p. 80).

The time has come for us as Council and staff responsible to our member churches for pursuing that goal to engage in a very serious discussion on how to proceed. We are urged on by the Message from Curitiba: "If our communion is to prove faithful as this millennium reaches its close, we must grow ever more closely together." (*ibid.*)

It is exceedingly important that the point I am making concerning the practical implications of our self-understanding as a communion not be heard in isolation from a determined and continuous quest for visible unity among all churches.

## Common Structures

In the life of the World Council of Churches three essential elements of visible unity have been identified: the common confessions of the apostolic faith, the mutual recognition of baptism, eucharist and ministry and **common structures for witness and service as well as for decision-making and teaching authoritatively**. These affirmations call us as a communion of churches within the ecumenical movement, drawn by the call to visible unity, critically to ask how the member churches of the LWF may confess their faith more clearly in their common life and witness. Are we as Lutheran churches able to speak with one voice in confronting the burning issues of humanity: salvation, unity, peace, justice and our future? Are we serious about moving toward a more audible and visible common confession of our faith in the context of shared life? How can the LWF appropriately contribute to the goal of visible unity by promoting among its own member churches common structures for witness and service, decision making and authoritative teaching?

As we move into this agenda we all--Council and staff--need to sharpen our spiritual sensitivities, draw on clear theological thinking and exercise a practical mindset in order to press for action and change. The time has come indeed for a **shift of emphasis from internal organizational matters to relationship issues between member churches**.

## Relationships among Member Churches

If we look at the relationships among separate Lutheran churches within one country, in a region or globally, we find that a number of formal and informal structures and networks exist. How can these contribute to greater cohesion within the whole family of churches?

Let us look at a few examples. A highly developed structure for unity among several Lutheran churches in the same country exists in the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (VELKD) which provides for election of its own bishop, conducts its own synods and is served by a secretariat. The United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India is also an expression of



integration between seven separate churches, led by a presiding bishop and a general secretary. The Nordic churches relate to each other mainly through the Nordic Conference of Bishops which is a forum for consultation with no formal status and which meets every third year. The Nordic Ecumenical Institute also has a Lutheran folk church function besides its mainly ecumenical agenda. In southern Africa a bold step forward was taken last year in establishing The Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa (LUCSA) which brings together the churches of several countries into a program for unity, mission and service. Unity negotiations are in a promising stage between our three member churches in Namibia and on a steady track in South Africa.

Other examples could be mentioned to indicate that several expressions of regional Lutheran unity exist within the LWF. But what about a more intentional and determined joint witness and service among these Lutheran churches? Is a stronger cooperation, even some form of integration possible? Given the relative closeness of their theological, cultural and social background, the Nordic churches might be strengthened if they were to do more together. Is this not the right time for the Lutheran churches in the Baltic area to demonstrate unity across national borders? How may a Lutheran synod for Central America bringing together all the Lutheran churches and congregations in the region become a reality? How may the three member churches in former Yugoslavia be assisted to transcend the national and ethnic conflict and demonstrate a deeper unity? What does it mean for Lutheran unity that the two Lutheran churches in former Czechoslovakia now will exist in two separate states? The same question applies to our member churches in Eritrea and Ethiopia. Could the creation of national committees in such places as Hong Kong, Taiwan, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Nigeria and Chile where we have from two to seven member churches in each nation be a first step to greater unity in mission and service? What is the role of the LWF in such a process?

The question I want to raise is if the time has not come to go deeper into the whole issue of the church as a national structure in relation to the global church. How can this vital question be approached in a way which is helpful for the renewal of the church and the strengthening of its mission and unity in the service of all humankind rather than be lost in a debate on impingement of sovereignty of each local church. At this time in history when churches are increasingly engulfed in nationalistic and ethnocentric feelings, a theological counterforce has to be mobilized to strike the proper balance between the local and the universal. Does not the total identification of church and nation as expressed in the very existence of many "national churches," state and folk churches, tend to mute the voice of the church when faced with a rampant or hidden nationalism based on ethnic identity, language, culture and history?

As our **Department for Theology and Studies** defines its tasks toward the next Assembly, this important ecclesiological and missiological concern should be studied and developed in close co-operation with the Department for Mission and Development and thus prepare the ground for new and bold steps in expressing more concretely the Lutheran churches of the world as a communion in faith, life and witness in the next millennium. If this area of concern is taken up, I believe a number of regional study projects could easily be established guaranteeing the concrete and practical orientations of the study. **The Consultation on Ministry** organized by the Office of the Assistant General Secretary for Ecumenical Affairs later this year will hopefully provide helpful steps toward greater ministerial unity among Lutherans.

Are there other ways available to the LWF churches to overcome isolation and express their shared life? Allow me to mention some possibilities without attempting to be complete.

**Communication** is the way through which personal and organizational relationships are expressed. In the report from the director for communications you will find proposals which intend to strengthen the flow of information within the constituency of the LWF. This is a vital function which no organization can do without. We need to assist the development of local communication skills in all our member churches, both to meet the need within the local church itself and in its relations to the other churches and the LWF. It has been very inspiring to notice in many isolated churches how stories about their life published in the *Lutheran World Information* (LWI) are read as an expression of the importance of their life to the whole communion. Likewise we know how important stories from other churches are to those in isolation. Recently during my visit to Eritrea,



the president of our member church began his greeting by referring to the struggle of the churches in Central America, in Liberia, in former Yugoslavia, and to comment on the visit of the LWF delegation to Rome and Constantinople as recently reported in LWI.

When we consider the limitation in funds, we must give priority to that part of our constituency which has the greatest deficit in communication, the churches in the southern hemisphere. They have the most important story to tell of the commitment to the gospel in times of war and suffering while they have the greatest hurdles to overcome in terms of communication. Europe and North America are saturated with information services both secular and churchly. Sometimes the same story appears three to four times to the same church readership in the Evangelische Pressedienst, LWI, Informationsdienst für lutherische Minderheitskirchen in Europa and maybe even in the Ecumenical Press Service, a publication of the World Council of Churches (WCC). A continued critical discussion of our communication strategy is called for in order to raise the profile of the LWF within the member churches. The report of the director for communications will inform and facilitate such a discussion.

If we want to reach the communicators in each member church we should consider developing a strategy to tell the LWF story directly at least to every bishop and synodical president in a format tailor-made for them. Other target groups may be identified and addressed. The point is that we must define the categories we want to reach and develop the appropriate means of communication. How many of the approximately 500 top Lutheran church leaders are able to share with their pastors, lay leaders and congregations what the LWF is about? If we really want to tell the story of the global Lutheran life in witness and service, joy and suffering, we need to address the language problem in a new way. This points in the direction of networks of local communicators. Here we are only at the beginning of an exciting journey.

### Staff Visits and Delegations to Member Churches

Another uniting factor in the life of the LWF member churches is staff visits and delegations. Visits this year by LWF president, Dr. Gottfried Brakemeier, and secretary for Europe, Dr. Tibor Görög, to the beleaguered churches in former Yugoslavia, and by myself to Nigeria, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Poland and Denmark have served to express solidarity and unity among all the churches of the LWF. Such travels are undertaken by many of our program staff during the year, especially by the area secretaries, and are indispensable for the unfolding and emerging of a vital global communion. The use of staff visits and LWF delegations should be analyzed with a view to maximum benefit for the churches and the work of the Secretariat.

Previously we saw more leaders from the South than from the North visiting the Secretariat. During the past twelve months we have seen an increase in delegations from member churches in the North to Geneva. Lately we received two delegations from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark, three from the Church of Norway and one from the Church of Sweden besides many individual visits of church leaders. This trend testifies to an emerging understanding that the LWF is there to serve all churches. The LWF has something to offer in almost all areas in the life of a national church. Thus a visit to Geneva may inspire not only the established "international" aspects of church life, but indeed also the more internal expressions of witness and service. One of the delegations focused on evangelization and renewal of congregational life in big cities in an increasingly secularized Europe. From the point of view of the Secretariat in Geneva such visits are of great importance and we are very conscious of our responsibility to offer a Lutheran and ecumenical program. I see this as a promising way to further strengthen the member churches in their relationship to each other and to make our expertise and resources available globally. This picture is of course not complete without mentioning the visits of church delegations from one church to another not only for special festive events but as a normal exchange.

Also regional conferences between member churches are a well-established means of relating member churches to each other. The regional conferences this year in Africa (Nairobi), Latin America (La Paz), and Europe (Riga) belong to the normal pattern of relationships between LWF member churches. These meetings are of great importance at the regional level of the LWF. At



this Council meeting we will begin to focus on the purpose and function of these conferences in relation to what the structure report speaks of, namely strengthened regional expressions between member churches. The preliminary reports on regionalization and on the function of **national committees** come to you at the right moment. We owe Dr. Anza Lema our gratitude for providing a solid basis for further discussion on these important issues. Both reports make it evident that the Council needs to come to grips with the potential of these instruments in overcoming isolation between member churches. While it is clear that a national committee takes on different forms and functions in various countries, it is generally seen to promote unity and cooperation as for example in this country, India. We therefore welcome the new national committee in Namibia and we encourage the churches in countries where there are several LWF member churches to move toward the establishment of such committees - notably here in Asia, in Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea and Taiwan. As we continue to develop the national committees, we must avoid the danger of creating bottlenecks among member churches and the LWF. On the basis of discussions at this meeting staff should present a concrete proposal for regionalization in 1993 and annually report on the progress in developing the instrument of national committees.

### Network of Women and Youth

Let me elaborate further the point about relationships between member churches by again drawing your attention to the work of the women's desk and the youth desk in weaving our member churches together. **Twenty years ago a desk for Women in Church and Society was established** in the Secretariat in Geneva. I believe the LWF has made a big impact on the life of member churches through this office. I recommend to you the study booklet *The Continuing Journey - Women's Participation in the Lutheran World Federation*. In follow-up to the Curitiba Message A Clear Plan of Action is presented to the Council at this meeting not least due to the energetic work of Dr. Musimbi Kanyoro. It is an important tool for attempting to end one of the most painful isolations in our member churches, namely that of women from the ordained ministry.

In my report to the Eighth Assembly I expressed the hope that before the next Assembly we would have **women as bishops** in our Lutheran churches. I spoke out of a theological conviction which I have not always held about the legitimacy of ordination of women. Only ten days ago I was privileged to participate on your behalf in the installation of **Bishop Maria Jepsen** in Hamburg. Later this year our member church in the United States of America will install **Pastor April Larson** in Lacrosse, Wisconsin as bishop. If the LWF's program has encouraged this development we need not apologize to anyone. Rather we should at this Council meeting celebrate and thank God for what has been achieved and pray for the overcoming of remaining obstacles in our member churches and in the oikumene. The ordination last year of two of our Council members, Prasanna Kumari here in Madras and Anna Eva Makyao in Tanzania, and also of Josephine Tso Shui-Wan in Hong Kong, bear out that ordination of women in Lutheran churches is not isolated to Europe and North America, but is increasingly accepted globally. These events should be seen as an encouragement to all our member churches to support each other in advancing toward full participation of men and women in all aspects of church life, and to overcome the isolation of the ordained ministry from the whole people of God. As Lutheran churches we want to share the gift of ordination of women with all other churches.

In the area of youth work it has always been clear that we are not aiming at a special global Lutheran youth organization. The main aim of the **LWF youth program** is to strengthen the youth work in the churches by helping them to utilize the international network the LWF represents. We want to facilitate the creation of fellowship, exchanging resources and developing leadership skills which cannot be done at local and national levels. At the same time, we encourage our member churches to make use of the gifts of youth in the life of the church be it spiritual, practical, social or in the decision-making areas. The recently published Youth Directory provides interesting reading about the different space and role that is open to youth in our member churches. The follow-up will show whether the space can be extended and the roles changed. Secretary for Youth in Church and Society, the Reverend Siv Limstrand, is increasingly connecting and integrating youth consultations with regional and other meetings within the LWF program. This is intended to help to "normalize" youth participation in the decision-making process of the churches. In turn it helps



the worldwide church to become more dynamically visible in local church work. Thus the LWF's youth program is aimed at overcoming the isolation of one age group from the other in our churches and to vitalize our communion.

### **Other Programs of the Department for Mission and Development**

In discussing the relationship among member churches and given the mandate of the Department for Mission and Development (DMD), the report of Dr. Ishmael Noko becomes particularly relevant. In presenting the work of the DMD in a very broad way, continent by continent, he makes a helpful contribution to assessing the strength and weakness of present relationships among member churches. The number of LWF-related consultations on an annual basis, more or less institutionalized, is an impressive reminder of the intensity of LWF programs conducted in and together with the member churches. Of particular interest this year are the report of the DMD Office for Christian Education and its consultation for North American Christian educators on "Global Awareness." The findings of this consultation as presented by Ms. Sandra Holloway provide a startling reminder of a geographical region where LWF program involvement has been laid back, but where precisely the global factor provides a source of inspiration and where the LWF is needed not for financial reasons, but for its ability to connect globally.

During my recent visit to Taiwan, I raised the question about what the Lutheran church leaders there saw as an instrument for unity among the seven Lutheran churches on the island and to the other churches in Asia. The answer was clear: It is the Asia Program for the Advancement of Training and Studies (APATS) that brings us together. The theological study program which is held in ownership by the churches in Asia provides for seminars of great value to foster unity in mission and service. The same goes for the program of theological education in Africa.

### **Arbitration within Member Churches**

Let me also in the context of relationships among member churches draw your attention to the role of arbitration which staff is asked to play within several member churches. This calls for the use of limited funds at short notice for pastoral staff visits or church delegations. This "ombudsman" function merits a project status of its own. It should, however, always be kept at a low profile. A special concern is expressed in Dr. Noko's report about misuse within some member churches of financial resources entrusted to them through LWF programs and projects. Needless to say, such matters must be pursued with great sensitivity. It is in the interest of everyone that the integrity of our service to and through member churches be safeguarded through transparency and confidence-building.

### **World Service as Bridge-Builder**

The strongest bridge-building effect in our entire work is perhaps that which is done through our Department for World Service as it reaches out across the globe with relief and development aid to people regardless of race, religion or gender. The seminar "Justice in Humanitarian Aid and Development" aims at a critical analysis of the interrelatedness of at least three essential aspects of our daily work: human rights, relief and long-term development. It is my hope that we will learn from this discussion both about the distinct character of each one of these concerns and their interwovenness in terms of our overall mandate, and that our staff work in Geneva and in the field will be impacted by it.

Director of the Department for World Service, Dr. Brian Neldner, whom we congratulate on a well-deserved honorary doctorate, has in his report presented a comprehensive overview of the work carried out since our meeting in Chicago.

The report bears out that the human face of suffering is global and so is the human heart in responding to the agonies of war and hunger. Poor nations in the South have accepted more refugees



and given them shelter within their borders than has any European nation. It is a rich nation and not a poor one that has sent Haitian refugees back to the open sea to return to a life of misery, even death. One of the painful issues arising is how we come to terms with disaster and distance. Is it easier for "the North" to respond to the plight of former Yugoslavia--and for that matter to less dramatic, but equally costly needs of all parts of former communist-dominated Eastern Europe--than to the desperate situation of 14 million people across Africa threatened by starvation? The LWF has continued to serve such ravaged areas as Somalia and Sudan through a very risky air-bridge, kept supply links open to Liberia and Ethiopia and established a joint response to the Africa drought with ecumenical partners. Our recent appeal for USD 1 million to aid former Yugoslavia has been prompted by the global nature of our constituency and our mandate. It gives me great satisfaction to note the strengthened relationships between our Department for World Service, related agencies and member churches, as well as the continued quest for ecumenical cooperation. I would hope that this Council meeting will again give support to this direction, and to the idea of one global, ecumenical instrument for diaconia and development.

### Ecumenical Relations

Ecumenical work is aimed at overcoming the isolation among churches who in the one baptism have been given the gift of unity. It calls them to visible unity, and assists them on the way.

Earlier I developed my thoughts on the implications of being a Lutheran communion in the context of communion in the larger, ecumenical sense, and I used as one example the conciliar movement among member churches in Africa. Under the auspices of the **Anglican-Lutheran International Commission**, a first meeting of African Anglican and Lutheran church leaders was held in Harare early this year. It was an exciting first step in enabling Lutheran and Anglican church leaders in southern and eastern Africa to explore together ways to strengthen and further the communion among them. I hope that the second meeting scheduled for early next year will put that process on a firm footing and chart clear steps toward fuller communion. Anglican-Lutheran relations in other regions of the world give reason to hope for visible progress along the path we set for ourselves in the Curitiba resolution on Anglican-Lutheran relations.

Earlier this year the LWF made two **ecumenical visits**, one to the **Ecumenical Patriarch** in Constantinople (Istanbul) and one to the **Vatican**. We in Geneva also enjoyed the visit to the LWF of the **Archbishop of Canterbury**. These events are fully reported by the assistant general secretary for ecumenical affairs, Dr. Eugene Brand. Here may I say that these occasions provided a much needed opportunity to reaffirm with our partners in dialogue the need for committed joint endeavors across a broad spectrum to advance and deepen our ecumenical relations. It is a special hope that our discussions with the Ecumenical Patriarch will give new impulses to the work of our Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission.

An acute awareness of the many signs of disunity and conflict, between churches which for years have worked at building positive relationships, marked all these talks. After a period of remarkable progress ecumenically, I can only characterize the general situation today as much less enthusiastic about unity, perhaps even retrogressive. We cannot just acquiesce in that; our commitment to Christian communion calls us to renewed efforts toward vital engagement with our ecumenical partners and to renewed affirmation of the goal Christ wills for the church, namely the kind of unity the world can see.

This calls for special attention to the **process of reception**. Not only must our dialogue documents be received, but we must give more attention to creating a receptive climate in our churches and congregations for closer relations with other Christian World Communions. As we explore this, I cannot but call attention to a serious problem which has emerged on the side of the Roman Catholic Church.



## The Recent Vatican Statement on Communio

The Vatican's response to the first of the Anglican-Roman Catholic documents (ARCIC I) was disappointing not only for Anglicans but also for us, the more so since it is the first time such an official response had been issued. We saw in it an inflexibility due to the lack of evaluating such a document on its own terms. During our visit to Rome we discussed this both with Cardinal Cassidy and the staff of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and with Cardinal Ratzinger.

More recently a letter to all Roman Catholic bishops was issued by Cardinal Ratzinger's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith with the title, "Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion." Even though it is an internal letter within the Roman Catholic Church, and even though only the last few paragraphs deal with "Ecclesial Communion and Ecumenism," any attempt to shape a Catholic concept of communion by the official guardians and interpreters of church teaching must be of vital concern to all Rome's dialogue partners. In that sense the entire document is ecumenical whether or not it is so intended. I can only say that I found the Ratzinger letter to be a **skandalon** in the true sense of the word, especially in the midst of our joint celebration of twenty-five years of dialogue.

On the basis of the Vatican II Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*) and the Decree on Ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*) one expects a Roman Catholic exposition of communion to require all churches to be in communion with the Pope, the Bishop of Rome. That reflects the patristic view, and in our dialogues and other documents we Lutherans have discussed the possible role of a reformed papacy as a ministry of unity for the whole church. But I find it woefully inadequate to focus a discussion of communion, as the letter does, almost entirely on structure, and to expect the rest of the Christian community to regard the papacy as it presently exists as a necessary (or **the** necessary) center of communion. And I see it as a step backward from Vatican II to assume that what Ratzinger calls the "universal church" is identifiable with today's Roman Catholic Church.

Ratzinger maintains that because the Orthodox churches are not in communion with Rome, they are "wounded." Because the rest of us are not in communion with Rome and also because we have not "retained the apostolic succession and a valid eucharist," we are more deeply "wounded." One could go on, but let this suffice to indicate that the Doctrinal Congregation's letter breathes a different spirit from that of Vatican II and seems both unaware of and totally insensitive to the progress toward unity which has been made in the quarter century since then. In a letter to Cardinal Cassidy I have stated:

If every bilateral ecumenical document must finally be approved by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and if the 28 May letter indicates that congregation's position, we cannot but ask whether further rapprochement is truly possible and whether the twenty-five years of the Catholic-Lutheran dialogue are taken seriously by the Roman Catholic Church as a whole.

The Standing Committee on Ecumenical Affairs will want to discuss this important issue which, for our part, we should not allow the clock to be set back on in Roman Catholic-Lutheran relations. We remain committed to the progress which has been made and to the expectation that there will be further progress. There can be no progress, however, if serious issues between us are simply swept under the carpet.

It is time to reaffirm our belief that ecumenism is not optional, but essential to the church. We must not let our vision be darkened by temporary setbacks. Rather with determination we must continue to act and speak in such a way that ecumenical awareness and commitment take root among all believers. It is from this perspective that the Council will be invited to consider a proposal for joint Bible study groups between Lutheran and Catholic parishes on texts related to the dialogue results of twenty-five years. This would be a significant step in the informal reception process. It could help us to recapture an element of enthusiasm combined with down-to-earth realism in our theological ecumenical dialogue.



## Relationship to the World Council of Churches

Last year I spoke of possibilities of closer relations between the LWF and other Christian World Communions and the WCC. More than forty years of participation in the life and work of the WCC have challenged Lutheran churches with a constantly renewed vision of the One Church, giving a united witness before the world to the gospel of Jesus Christ. It has not always been easy for our member churches or for the two secretariats in Geneva to define the distinctive roles of each organization. But with mutual respect for the self-understanding of each organization, and an honest attempt to overcome inevitable tensions, a close relationship of complementarity has developed. Several reports will indicate the progress made over the past year, but this task is ongoing. We need to continue to pursue with determination the course upon which we have agreed.

Especially in view of new leadership and structural change still in progress in the WCC, Lutherans must continue to support and affirm the crucial role and purpose of the WCC in the ecumenical movement. We are convinced that a positive interaction between the multilateral and bilateral approaches to church unity is productive and the only realistic way forward. As Lutherans we must be heard within the broader ecumenical movement as a strong voice for **unity which begins at home**.

The time has also come for the LWF to encourage its member churches to play a more active role in such regional ecumenical organizations as the Christian Conference of Asia or the All Africa Conference of Churches. That is a natural consequence of greater LWF attention to regionalization, but it is also a goal to be pursued on its own merits.

The decision of the Council meeting in Chicago to strengthen cooperation and coordination between the organizations in the **Ecumenical Center** in Geneva have been followed up by a broad array of activities as is reported to the Council by the deputy general secretary and the assistant general secretary for ecumenical affairs. From the point of view of those churches which are simultaneously members of the WCC, the LWF and the Conference of European Churches this seems to be a much appreciated development as they are becoming more vocal in demanding close cooperation in Geneva. The vigor and clarity of purpose with which such practical cooperation is now being pursued is promising. So far, the discussion has mainly taken place between the secretariats of the WCC and LWF, but should be gradually broadened. The most sensitive issues of relationship at the practical level are matters related to personnel, recruitment, salary and other conditions of service. Without taking any position on an alleged discrepancy in remuneration, we should consider that by a certain date, say 1996, all salaries, benefits, pensions and working conditions should be harmonized. This would facilitate recruitment from member churches and give a bonus in terms of joint finance, personnel and overall administration in the Ecumenical Center.

## Ecumenical News Service

I had looked forward to reporting to you on the launching of the **Ecumenical News Service (ENS)** this year. Two factors have contributed to what I hope is a delay and not a final demise of the project, namely lack of outside funding and disagreement among the founding organizations about the implications ENS would have on the existing internal information services.

The director of communication services will report in detail on the latest developments. Suffice it to say here that the situation has led to a new proposal from our side of a smaller project which safeguards the intentions of ENS, while it respects the financial exigencies. The proposal we have forwarded to the cooperating organizations amounts to one third of the original costs (approximately SFr. 600,000 per year) and is deemed to be professionally viable if not ideal. In our view we should continue to pursue the ENS vision within affordable means. The LWF members appointed to the ENS board, Walter Meyer-Roscher and Thor Bjarne Bore, should continue to advise the LWF until the board can become operational. The message from this meeting should be that the LWF is committed to ENS and ready to meet its responsibilities within a realistic and viable project and that we are ready to discuss any helpful proposal that may bring the vision of ENS to fruition.



## Human Rights, Peace, Reconciliation

Let me move to another area of our work where the overcoming of isolation and building of bridges is pivotal, that of human rights. Here too we are at the beginning of a new phase in our work. It is mind and faith shattering how "the genocidal option" is emerging on the world stage and being vigorously pursued in former Yugoslavia and passively promoted through a lukewarm response from the affluent world to the unparalleled hunger and civil war catastrophe in Somalia. The continued plight of millions threatened by starvation in other parts of Africa is met with resignation and inaction in many quarters. As a communion of churches which is again and again challenged to identify with helpless and desperate people on every continent, we cannot accept such a situation.

From this meeting we should again call for a continued **theologically informed reflection on human rights** in all our member churches. One of the emerging issues which we will need to discuss here in Madras is to which extent and on what grounds is the use of international military force justifiable to protect innocent men, women and children against the aggressions, violence and carnage of their own leaders. The immediate reference is of course Bosnia-Herzegovina and Somalia, but the implications are much larger. The appeal from starving, wounded, unsheltered, terrorized, helpless and desperate millions, presents world leaders and especially the United Nations with a stark choice. Also the global church must be haunted by this question. Have we with all our rhetorics on "justice, peace and integrity of creation" made enough efforts to give a credible and realistic response to this humanitarian challenge? It seems providential that the theme "Justice in Humanitarian Aid and Development" should have been chosen for our meeting in 1992 and that it will be looked at from the perspective of India. Our member churches have raised this issue with vigor both in theological reflection and concrete programs.

In his Christmas message of 1991, printed in the Indian Lutheran newsletter, Dr. Rajaratnam laid out this painful global scenario and courageously put India into this context:

To speak of India in this century, we still see Dalits hacked to death in a small sleepy Andhra village.... An innocent helpless woman was paraded naked in the streets for offenses she did not commit. Women continue to face more and more hurdles and are unable to experience and live fully their womanhood. There has been an unprecedented rise in religious and communal fundamentalism. All these negate human life. It symbolizes the suffering and agony of (the) humankind.

The preparatory material to this meeting bears out clearly that humanitarian aid can no longer be separated from human rights. Local churches are often caught in a maelstrom of ethnic, tribal and caste conflicts. At times there is an open or tacit complicity in human rights violations by segments of the church making a contribution by these churches difficult or even impossible. In some countries, the human rights situation affects the church directly violating its right to speak and act according to its biblical mandate. Sometimes the only, but nevertheless significant contribution to the human rights struggle is **for the church to stay alive** and to come to terms with all the difficult compromises this implies in a totalitarian context. The same **ethical dilemma** is encountered in some of the areas in which we have world service programs. To maintain a continued presence and assistance for the poorest sectors of society, to give them income, food, education and health care is in itself to take a stand for human dignity and human rights. This is understood and appreciated most by those for whom the world service program has become a lifeline and hope. In such cases it becomes clear that there definitely is a continued need for the Lutheran communion to act on behalf of **voiceless churches and oppressed communities**.

Since the position of "assistant general secretary for international affairs and human rights" was created in 1985 in the General Secretariat, the LWF has sharpened its profile for peace and human rights. We enjoy confidence within the global church community as well as with oppressed groups of people in many countries. Our work is highly appreciated in the international governmental and nongovernmental community. This has been a necessary stage in moving toward a human rights program in all member churches. As indicated also in the report of Dr. Paul Wee, the time has, however, come to shift from a concentration on the Secretariat in Geneva to what each one of our



member churches can and must do in the area of human rights and conflict resolutions. The Geneva task is to help to facilitate this process and to empower the member churches as they act within their own context.

In a conversation recently with the leader of one of our member churches in Africa, I was asked: "How can the LWF help us to take up the human rights abuses in our country?" "Is your church ready to play an active role," I asked. "We are ready, but we need assistance from the LWF as to how to deal with human rights issues. Also we need some small funds for publication of a human rights information letter." This is very encouraging. In many of our member churches in the South, there is an increasing awareness of the holistic view of mission which understands peace and human rights efforts as integral and mandatory. Our member church in Brazil has in an exemplary way integrated the struggle for human rights and ecology in their actions for the rights of the indigenous Indian population and the rain forest of the Amazon.

The Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference in Guatemala has set an example with its well-organized documentation of human rights abuses. On an appropriate scale such efforts should be possible in all of our member churches.

Related agencies such as **Danchurchaid** and **Norwegian Church Aid** have recently developed strategy documents which are innovative in terms of integrating human rights and peace in all their programs. Experiences gained by the LWF in the Guatemala peace process may provide a model for cooperation with churches, popular organizations and related agencies in other countries as well as with governments and nongovernmental organizations. A more intentional strategy by the LWF to facilitate and build up human rights and peace programs in our member churches presupposes an integrated approach in the Secretariat in Geneva engaging all departments and units. At the same time a shift in emphasis using more resources in the member churches for training, advocacy, and so on, adds to an already strong rationale for Geneva-based activities to be carried out in much closer coordination and cooperation with the WCC and other international offices. The furthering of an active involvement of every Lutheran church, big or small, in the area of human rights and peace, should therefore be seen as a priority in the coming years for the Secretariat in Geneva. This shift in strategy has already been initiated, as is witnessed by the approach we have taken to the children's issue emanating from the United Nations World Summit for Children and on the question of the relation of Lutheran churches to the Jewish communities. In both areas we have turned to the member churches for their active involvement. Many churches, of course, already have well-organized activities in place in this area, meaning that the networking function of Geneva needs to become more structured and systematic. In such an approach the Geneva office should function as a "secretariat of secretariats."

## Faith, Gospel, Culture

Asia provides an important context and resource to consider the importance of other faiths and religions for our Christian faith and thereby to overcome the cultural isolation of Christianity.

Inculturation is an exciting theme for the global church, where the churches on this continent have a special contribution to render. The issue of gospel and culture surfaced at the WCC Assembly in Canberra, but did not then get appropriate attention as to its vital importance for the mission of the church. At the recent meeting of the WCC Central Committee in Geneva it was made a priority for the future. This theme is already part of the ongoing reflection and practice in many churches, but it needs to be defined and pursued in theological and Christian education programs and in all expressions of authentic and contemporary spirituality. It is to be welcomed by the global church that the **Christian Conference of Asia** has set **dialogue, spirituality and theology** as its priority. The Lutheran churches should join this search for authentic Asian spirituality and more programmatically enter the dialogue with persons of other faiths. A contribution from our Department for Theology and Studies is presented to you at this meeting: *Islam in Asia - Perspectives for Christian-Muslim Encounter* which is a report of a consultation sponsored by the LWF and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. It is hoped that this book will serve as a resource and stimulus for churches, especially in Asia, to become more attentive to the needs and concerns of



their Muslim neighbors. Another aim of this publication is to promote dialogue and understanding between Christians and Muslims.

As the Council faces this challenge, we need to listen again to our Curitiba mandate. There we devoted a major part of our Message to the witnessing vocation of the church among people of other faiths or no faith. Meeting here in India we are reminded of the many questions raised by religious pluralism. How do we avoid the mutual hostility and conflict often inspired by religious claims? How can we establish a relationship of trust with people of other faiths? How can we work together for the sake of human welfare in spite of religious differences and inherited prejudices?

The Curitiba Message offers the following affirmation:

The Christian commitment to witness in the midst of other religious communities is rooted in God's love for all humanity. The God we confess in our faith is not an exclusive God but the God who reaches out in love to all nations and cultures. Our witness to people of other faiths is not only grounded in our conviction of God's universal love but also in our deeper awareness that God is the creator of all people, the bestower of good gifts to all people, and the One who is present and works in the lives and communities of people who adhere to other faiths and religions.

... To engage in dialogue implies respect, concern and hospitality toward others. Dialogue is an attitude of sensitivity, humility and openness to others. (Curitiba Message, Witness in a World of Religious Pluralism, LWF Report 28/29, p. 83).

Through dialogue the Christian community breaks out of its isolation and is helped to overcome its minority complex and maybe even fear, as the Message rightly states: "The challenge of dialogue is that it helps to overcome the ghetto mentality evident in many religious communities." (*ibid.*)

Convening here in Asia we must also gratefully acknowledge how through the LWF's world service program in countries like India and Bangladesh, the LWF has been actively involved in dialogue at the deepest and most existential levels with people of Hindu and Muslim communities. We have not yet reflected theologically on this reality fully nor made this unique experience an integral part of the reflection in our constituency on the mission of the church.

In our Department for Theology and Studies the issue of dialogue will be given a new thrust with the arrival of Dr. Hance Mwakabana. This then is the right time for us to go deeper into the challenge of how the LWF can assist its member churches toward an authentic dialogue which affirms our conviction that salvation is offered to us in Jesus Christ alone and yet not limiting the saving power of God, approaching others in humility and confidence and not in judgment. Acute situations of religiously inflamed conflicts, for example in Nigeria and former Yugoslavia call for a different accompaniment by the LWF than in the past. Important as it is to conduct dialogue between scholars of theology and philosophy, there is an even greater need today to address the concrete issues which touch lives dramatically each day in many local communities. The leadership of our member church in Nigeria is faced with a tremendous task to convince the faithful that violence and counterviolence are totally unacceptable as a means to regulate Christian-Muslim relations. The aggression against the Muslim community by Christians in parts of former Yugoslavia is both a local and a global issue. Such attitudes and actions by Christians against people of other faiths must be condemned. What is called for now are practical programs aimed at pastoral formation and education at the local level.

At this Council meeting we should therefore reaffirm the following convictions and commitments expressed in Curitiba and begin to seek concrete ways to their implementation:



- To explore with people of other faiths, ways in which we may undertake common endeavors which promote justice, peace and the integrity of creation.
- To study our own Christian faith in depth and others' faiths sympathetically, in order to better understand the relationships between them.
- To accelerate our efforts to equip people for witness and dialogue through education, encounters, one-to-one relationships and the utilization of persons who have crossed religious or cultural boundaries.
- To hold before our Christian brothers and sisters the interrelationship of witness and dialogue as integral to Christian mission and self-understanding. (*ibid.*, Commitments, p. 84).

### A New LWF China Program

Let me place before you a very specific and urgent point in this context. Having this year again visited the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, I am seized by the importance of "everything Chinese" to the future of humanity. We are speaking about a fifth of the world's population, one of the most ancient cultures and religious-based value systems in the world. The major part of this Chinese community is under a social and political system which has failed in other parts of the world. Tiananmen Square and Tibet are names that continue to mobilize strong concerns for human rights. A worship service which I was privileged to attend in downtown Beijing with 1,600 old and young worshipers, most of them with their "printed-in-China" Bible in their hands, gives cause to a nuanced assessment of the future of religious freedom. LWF conversations with government officials in China and Geneva over the past few years likewise give reason for a cautious optimism about a place for the Christian church in this largest nation of the world.

I have briefly above, under the section of personnel matters, indicated the need for greater flexibility in staffing models in order to meet special challenges. The challenge of China today and tomorrow is a case in point. I would like to suggest a special study program for the period of 1994 to 1997 to be lodged in the Department for Theology and Studies and working integrally with the Department for Mission and Development, especially its Asia Desk and with the member churches. The China study carried out in the studies department during the years 1971 - 1983 might serve as a background, but its orientation must be more focused and church oriented. We should seek special funding for this project and invite a Chinese Lutheran theologian to lead the program. Given the post-denominational orientation of Christianity in the People's Republic of China and the distinct confessional identity of our Chinese member churches, it will be imperative that the ecumenical and confessional aspects of Christian presence and witness within the Chinese culture be taken seriously.

Let me toward the end of this rather lengthy report focus on two items which relate to the main theme of this report, that of building communion and breaking isolation.

### 1994 Church Leaders Consultation

In my report to the Chicago Council meeting, I proposed the holding of a Lutheran Church Leaders Consultation in 1994, i.e. a meeting of Council members and other leaders of our member churches. You voted to request the general secretary to present a more complete report on this proposal here in Madras. Following further staff work and consultation with the Executive Committee, a letter was sent with a questionnaire to all heads of the member churches. A detailed report will be presented by the deputy general secretary. I only want to say here that the idea has been met with an overwhelmingly positive response both in regard to the concept, its general program outline and the sharing of costs. In financial terms this seems to be a viable option and a good investment in strengthening the relationships among member churches as is also reflected in the positive reference to this proposal in the report from the panel on finances.



## **LWF Documentation**

Besides the support of more than 90 percent of those churches which have responded to the letter, I am happy to report that the cabinet and program staff as far as I have been able to ascertain are enthusiastic about this possibility of a midterm gathering to galvanize the communion of Lutheran churches for unity, mission and service. If the Council at this meeting is prepared to endorse the holding of such a consultation, staff will present a complete program for the Council's review at next year's meeting. Invitations would, however, have to be sent immediately.

## **LWF Assembly 1997**

At this Council meeting we shall finish reviewing the Eighth Assembly and begin to discuss venues of the next Assembly in 1997. The possibility of an invitation from the member churches in Hong Kong was discussed during my visit with church leaders also in Nanjing and Taipei. A strong case can be made for a global Christian gathering in Hong Kong in 1997 inside the People's Republic of China. This might be a clear sign to the tens of millions of Chinese believers everywhere that we belong together in the worldwide reality of the Church as the Body of Christ. It might be an unexpected opportunity also for the global church to listen with respect to the way of the Chinese church and learn from its history and life today. Having now received such an invitation, we should at this meeting agree on whether this venue in principle is acceptable or not given the political and other issues related to Hong Kong's inclusion in the People's Republic of China in 1997. If this venue in principle is acceptable, the invitation will be processed together with the invitation from our member church in Canada, and possible other invitations. A report will be presented to the Council for its decision in 1993.

Dear friends, to this ancient crossroads in Asia, we have come to seek guidance for the journey ahead. We have come to build bridges and manifest communion. We have come, as John writes to the churches of Asia, to listen to what the Spirit says to the churches. The task may seem awesome and our resources few. But it is God who in Christ has called us to be the One Body of Christ, the one holy, catholic and apostolic Church, in which there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism with one mission to the world. So let us go forward in faith and with joy confessing with the Apostle Paul:

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen (Eph. 3:20-21).



## FINANCING A WORLD COMMUNION

### *Report of the Panel on Financial Strategies*

#### I. INTRODUCTION

##### A. Mandate

At the Council meeting in Chicago, USA, in July 1991, Dr. Gunnar Staalsett, LWF general secretary, addressed the financial situation of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). He noted that due to reduced income the LWF was still facing financial deficits despite reduced administrative costs as a result of restructuring initiated in 1990. He further proposed a panel "to look at the total financial strategy and viability of the LWF in the future."

The Council approved the appointment of a panel on the financial strategies of the LWF with the following mandate:

It shall be the mandate of this panel in respect to both the administrative and program budgets of the federation:

- to reflect on the role of the Lutheran World Federation and the expectations that the member churches have of the Geneva Secretariat;
- to assess the potential of the member churches to provide the required financial support to the Secretariat;
- to review the financial viability of the programs and priorities endorsed by the Curitiba Assembly;
- to advise on the manner of funding of the federation, including all sources for funding (e.g. membership contributions, church and non-church grants, etc.); and
- to report, with recommendations, to the Council in 1992.

The panel members named were: the Rev. Horst Becker, Germany, chairperson, Ms. Dorothy Marple, USA, Mr. Elias Sawe, Tanzania, Mr. Per Vokso, Norway, Ms. Christina Rogestam, Sweden (ex officio), Mr. Walter Schultz, Canada, secretary. Mr. Friedrich Manske, LWF director for finance and administration, served as a consultant.

The panel met four times: in November 1991 and in February, April and May 1992.

In pursuing the mandate of the Council, the panel examined considerable financial documentation. Interviews based on a previously distributed questionnaire were held with department directors and staff designated by them in order:

- a. to gain insights into member churches' expectations of the Secretariat;
- b. to assess the financial viability of programs and priorities growing out of directions set by the Curitiba Assembly;
- c. to learn firsthand about working relationships within the LWF and also with similar units in the World Council of Churches (WCC) and about fund-raising procedures in each department or office; and



## LWF Documentation

- d. to solicit suggestions for improving the future financial stability of the federation.

These interviews were candid and helpful in both analyzing the present situation and in developing elements for a new financial strategy.

The panel also conducted an exploratory study on the "flow of funds" of the churches and related agencies in several countries (Germany, Norway, Sweden and the United States) to the LWF, WCC, Conference of European Churches (CEC) and bilaterally to other churches and regional structures for both mission and development purposes. Time limitations prohibited asking member churches directly about their expectations of the Secretariat. Rather, the panel relied on knowledge of their respective constituencies, the observations of Secretariat staff, and reports of discussions from the 1991 LWF Council meeting.

This report does not exhaust all of the possibilities that could be pursued in developing financial strategies for the LWF. Since the mandate focuses on administrative and program budgets, no effort has been made to evaluate the present structure which, like any organizational structure, has direct financial implications. **The redesigned organization should be given the chance to demonstrate its value and usefulness.** Similarly, the panel has not attempted to evaluate current programs and projects with a view to reducing or eliminating some in order to improve the financial prospects of the LWF. Such an evaluation must be done within a larger framework of determining future directions for the LWF looking to the year 2000. Questions are raised, however, in several areas.

The panel was not expected to find ways to resolve issues related to the 1992 and 1993 budgets. Rather, concentrated attention was given to developing a strategy which would affect funding for 1994 and the following years.

## B. LWF - The Continuing Journey

"Becoming" is firmly etched in the nearly half century journey of the LWF. The maelstrom of World War II with its consequent suffering provided the impulse for Lutheran Christians to help each other materially and spiritually. **In 1947, forty-nine Lutheran churches formally organized a "free association."** Covenanted cooperation brought together three streams of service and theological activity in a more organized and comprehensive way. These streams included the Scandinavian-American cooperation for the "orphaned missions," the welfare and refugee programs of North American Lutheran churches which assisted Europeans living in devastated conditions, and the pre-World War II Lutheran World Convention, a loosely organized association of church leaders and theological teachers who had come together for theological discussion.

Working together in these three fields, the LWF grew immensely during the 1950s and 1960s. The organization expanded. Within the churches, awareness of belonging together deepened and the recognition of Lutheran churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America and their contribution to a worldwide community of Lutherans grew in appreciation and understanding. Ecumenical responsibilities, present from the very beginning, were enlarged as the LWF engaged in various activities delegated to it by its member churches.

**Restructuring by the Evian Assembly (1970)** recognized the expanding membership and organizational growth of the LWF. Three departments, Church Cooperation, Studies, and World Service were organized with an emphasis on seeking new models for cooperation with member churches and responding to changing church and societal needs. Departments were guided by twelve-member commissions comprised of representatives from the member churches. Subsequent to the Assembly, the Commission on Communication was created to match requirements in a new communication age.

In the next two decades, the number of member churches and available financial resources continued to expand. LWF work grew as the ever present needs of people multiplied for the physical necessities of life, for salvation and hope in a changing, often violent global world. At the same



time, the member churches recognized in a deeper way the communion (koinonia) embedded in their life together in the LWF. **The Curitiba Assembly (1990) formally declared the LWF a communion of churches** with the adoption of a new constitution and restructured the LWF to reflect this declaration.

With an emphasis on the interdependence of the member churches, a fifty-member Council combined the functions and responsibilities of the Executive Committee and the four commissions. A Secretariat comprised of three offices and three departments was designed to assist member churches in making concrete the communion characterizing their relationships. The Office of the General Secretary provides executive leadership in carrying out the decisions of the Assembly, the Council, its program and standing committees, and has responsibility for international affairs and interconfessional and ecumenical relationships. Three other offices provide support services. The Departments for World Service, Theology and Studies, and Mission and Development provide program assistance. The latter includes communication consultative services and the former Community Development Service (CDS).

A Project Committee, also related to this department, acts on requests for financial assistance from member churches to assist them in their mission and service. Thus the three "classical" areas of work along with a strong resolve for Christian unity continue on the LWF journey as member churches experience mutual support and engagement in mission.

## II. FINANCING THE LWF NOW

### A. Present Situation

The **present financial situation** which led to the appointment of this panel--deficit financing despite substantial savings in administrative costs as a result of restructuring, including staff reductions--**is not a new situation**. An examination of the Reports of the Treasurer to the Budapest and Curitiba Assemblies in 1984 and 1990 reveals the same anguish as the Council is now experiencing in carrying forward LWF work in faithfulness to the requests and hopes of the member churches.

In both reports, the treasurer spoke of "**stopgap measures**" being taken more and more frequently to balance the administrative budget. These stopgap measures, leaving staff positions unfilled, using currency gains and raising funds from special budget items of a few member churches, are still being used.

As the panel reviewed the financial reports of the LWF in 1991, to date in 1992, and projections for 1993 and 1994, we found the unrelenting need to reduce projected administrative expenditures even if there might be an adverse effect on programs. This has been due to decreased financial assurances from some supporting member churches and related agencies and static contributions or only nominal increases from others. Income for administration from 1989 to 1991 decreased by 6.4% (SFr. 1.2 million). Stopgap measures were again necessary to minimize the impact of this drop in income despite the fact that a leaner and more streamlined Secretariat with 105 staff positions rather than 125 reduced administrative expenses. Balanced budgets were achieved only by delaying the starting time of some new appointments and by leaving some positions vacant.

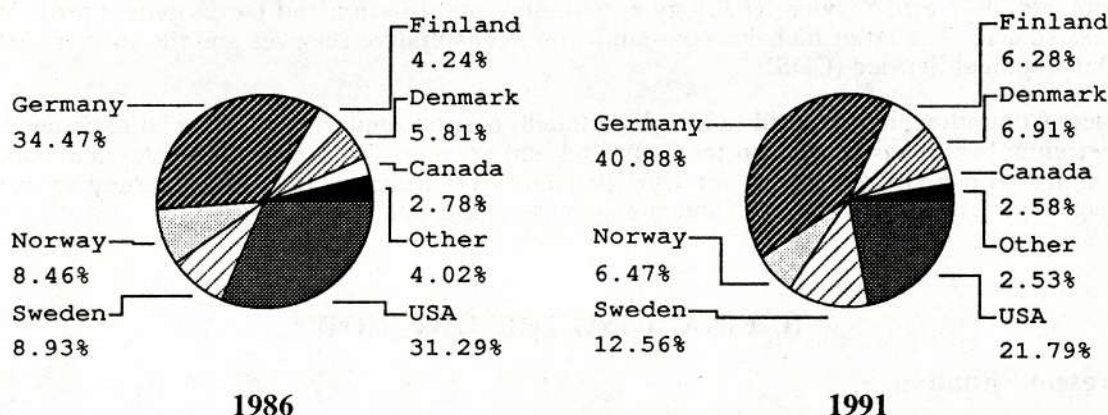
Because the year 1991 did not accurately reflect the new structure with all necessary changes in staffing, 1992 was anticipated as a more "normal" year. However, when assurances did not match projected income, the administrative budget was reduced twice before Executive Committee final approval in January 1992. Decreases in the budget were again accomplished mainly by delaying the starting date of newly appointed staff and not filling remaining staff positions until at least 1993.

The forecast for 1993 and 1994 shows a widening gap between projected expenditures and income assuming the 105 staff positions are filled. This gap will likely increase if exchange rates as forecast are less favorable in 1992, interest income decreases and special arrangements regarding the use of currency exchange gains to meet administrative budget needs are no longer acceptable.



**Income.** The pattern of support for the administrative budget amplifies the seriousness of the forecast for 1993 and 1994 and heightens anxiety about the LWF's financial future. As shown in the graph displaying sources of income by countries, **member churches and related agencies in seven countries provided support for approximately 97% of the 1991 administrative budget.** This percentage is similar to that of five years earlier. However, contributors in two countries decreased their support of the 1991 administrative budget as compared with support given in 1986.

### INCOME FROM MEMBER CHURCHES/AGENCIES BY COUNTRIES FOR THE LWF ADMINISTRATIVE BUDGET



**Membership contributions** during the last five years have comprised, on the average, **11% of the annual total income** received for the administrative budget. During the same period the number of churches making contributions ranged from 80% to 90% of the membership. Churches in the seven countries described above as providing nearly all of the support for the administrative budget also provided 98% of the total membership contributions in 1991.

To add to the fragility of the financial situation, the income structure by sources shows a high **dependency on interest earnings**. Annually, an average of 10% of income is derived from interest. This sensitive income element is dependent on contributions from member churches and related agencies coming early in the year, market conditions and the availability of cash for short-term investment. Five percent from interest income is a reasonable assumption for long-term projections.

Another sensitive factor is **currency fluctuations** which make forecasting of income difficult particularly for the administrative budget because it generally is expended in Swiss francs. An exchange of assurances from local currencies into Swiss francs would facilitate the budgeting process and give a more accurate picture of income and expenditures. The risk of currency losses, however, would be transferred to the member churches and related agencies, especially in the United States and Canada.

When financial support from contributors for both administration and programs/projects is combined a similar picture emerges. Receipts from member churches and related agencies in seven countries comprise nearly 98% of the total contributions.

Programs in the Department for Mission and Development and project requests for mission and communication have outdistanced assured income in the last two years. Program/project requests (excluding CDS development) in US dollars increased 52% in 1991 (US \$4,386,104) compared with 1990. During the last five years, the percentage of assurances for these requests has fluctuated from year to year, but the trend is downward. Assurances fell 46% short of the requests in



1991 as compared with a 39% shortage in 1990. However, in recent years approximately 95% of the assistance for approved development projects (formerly CDS) has been assured.

**General Reserves.** The LWF does not have endowment funds to generate income to cover possible deficits. The only funds available are those designated as General Reserves which represent the excess of annual income over expenditures for departmental and office administration. In the 1987 - 1991 period, General Reserves ranged from a low of 15.1% of total annual administrative expenditures in 1990 to a high of 23.2% in 1991. In the event of a total stoppage of funds, the actual reserves would not in any one year have been sufficient to cover three months of operation.

## B. Present Planning, Budgeting and Funding Process

Stewardship of the financial resources entrusted to the LWF for carrying out its purpose and functions worldwide requires effective planning and budget-development procedures.

For purposes of financial planning, LWF work centers on activities and consultative services designed to support (and undergird) member churches as they engage in mission. This work for many years has been described in terms of programs and projects and administration. **Programs are usually activities initiated by Secretariat staff to reflect the directions set by the Assembly, the decisions of the Council, and the requests of member churches.** However, they may also come from the Secretariat "as an expression of global mutuality among all churches." (Report of the Executive Committee on LWF Restructuring, III. Principles for Structure, Para.22.)

Programs include consultations, studies, publications, services to provide counsel and similar activities to serve the member churches. Also included are large-scale programs of relief, rehabilitation, service to refugees, and long-term development activities which are the responsibility of the Department for World Service. Operational field services are provided by world service staff on four continents.

**Projects generally reflect specific requests for financial assistance from member churches to assist them in meeting mission, communication and development needs.** Community development projects may also be long-term. Programs/projects comprise what is commonly called the "B" part of the "Summary of Needs."

**Administration by the Secretariat**, often referred to as "Geneva Implementation," represents basically the staff who are appointed to design and directly implement or facilitate the implementation of programs/projects. The budget for administration described as the "A Budget" brings together all staff-related costs, travel and organizational maintenance costs.

### Planning

Although the departments and offices have been engaged in planning on a short-term basis, usually one year, coordination has been lacking. As a result of restructuring, planning processes are being developed to enable the Secretariat to design and provide coordinated programs and services. The intention is to project specific plans for at least three years. As an initial step processes are being designed to develop a common vision for the LWF. Drawing on the resources of the LWF as a communion of churches, the views of the department and office, member churches and related agencies, and the Council are necessary in the process. The 1994 Church Leaders Consultation could be an important event in involving member churches in long-range planning.

### Budget Development

The time-honored way of dividing LWF work into two categories, administration and programs/projects, involves different processes in budget development. These processes originate in the Secretariat.



## **LWF Documentation**

One process relates to developing an **administrative budget** with major responsibility resting with the Office for Finance and Administration. This office estimates all staff-related costs (salaries and benefits) and organizational maintenance costs (WCC charges for office rental and other services, travel, office supplies, PTT, etc.). Consultations are held frequently with the general secretary, individual office and department directors, and the cabinet. The office prepares a budget for each unit and for the entire LWF.

The second process involves departments and offices developing program proposals and dealing with project requests by member churches. LWF staff are deeply involved in developing program proposals and estimating costs. Interdepartmental committees may review and react to these proposals to foster coordination.

**Project requests** are not budgeted although Secretariat staff initially screen all requests and may provide counsel to the member church asking for assistance. Actual implementation of projects rests with the requesting member churches.

**Program proposals** with cost estimates and the administrative budget are given to the appropriate office or departmental program committee for consideration. They are brought together in the Summary of Needs for Council action.

## **Funding**

The LWF has historically relied upon the **member churches and related agencies as the major financial supporters**. Funding from this major source along with other sources is described as follows:

**Membership Contributions.** Member churches are asked to make a yearly contribution which is used to help meet Secretariat administrative costs. The goal for the requested contributions has been at least one US cent for each individual church member.

**Contributions from Churches for Administrative Budget and Programs/Projects.** Member churches provide additional financial support from their budgets for administrative costs, programs/projects and responses to appeals for special projects. These contributions may also be obtained by each church through voluntary giving and special appeals to congregations and individuals and as grants from governments and governmental agencies.

Because of the variety of church structures, practices and sources of funding within the member churches, contributions may be designated for either the "A Budget" or "B" programs/projects or for both "A" and "B" or given as a block grant(s). The use of a block grant is determined by the receiving LWF office or department which shares the decision with the supporting member church. Member church contributions may be allocated by the church itself, a mission board or ecumenical office, and/or a national committee according to the criteria and procedures established by each church.

**Contributions from Church-Related Agencies.** Substantial financial support is provided by agencies related to the member churches. These agencies vary from church to church in both number and purpose. Some agencies rely entirely on major appeals for voluntary giving among church members while others also manage, monitor and distribute funds provided by governments and governmental agencies. The majority of these funds are earmarked for development purposes, relief and emergency assistance and for peace efforts in designated areas throughout the world. A few may be used for general administrative purposes.

Because of these varied sources of income, each church-related agency has established its own criteria for the allocation of funds. Some funds are distributed multilaterally through the LWF and others are given directly to churches and other related organizations. In some instances, the contributions must honor the criteria and reporting requirements established by governments or governmental agencies for distribution of their respective fund. For the LWF, this normally means



designation of funds by the related agencies for specific items in the "A Budget" and "B" programs/projects.

**Contributions from Governmental Agencies.** In connection with service programs operated by the Department for World Service, financial support for specific programs under terms of contract for service are provided by governmental agencies such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), European Economic Community and United Nations Relief and Works Agency. These programs include services for refugees and displaced persons, disaster responses, and for meeting endemic needs through multipurpose development.

**Other Sources.** Funding is augmented by interest earnings, service fees paid by the UNHCR to the Department for World Service, sales and subscriptions, gains on currency transactions, foundation grants and General Reserves.

### **Requesting Funding**

The Summary of Needs which expands in detail the approved Summary of Needs for administration and programs carried out by the Secretariat and projects approved by the Project Committee provides the primary information for requesting year-to-year financial support.

Various procedures have been used for soliciting funds for both the "A Budget" and programs/projects listed in the "B" category. The Department for World Service undertakes fund raising for all of its work listed in both "A" and "B" in the Summary of Needs. Occasionally, other departments and offices in the Secretariat seeking support for the "A Budget" have sent key staff persons through the Office for Finance and Administration to make a coordinated and interpretive presentation to major supporters.

Seeking funds for the "A Budget" is an ongoing process during a fiscal year. Secretariat staff maintain an up-to-date record of financial assurances in order to keep deficit financing to a minimum and the Office for Finance and Administration regularly monitors both income and expenditures. Anticipated shortages of funds for the "A Budget" requires reconsideration by the Executive Committee.

Funding for "B" programs/projects is primarily the responsibility of the offices and departments within the Secretariat but is carried out in coordination with the Office for Finance and Administration. Consultants from most of the major supporting churches and related agencies may attend Project Committee meetings and assure a specific amount of financial support primarily for development projects. Direct contacts (correspondence, telephone, visits) are also made with all member churches and related agencies in order to obtain definite commitments of financial support.

Contacts and consultations with supporters go on throughout a budget year as long as funds are needed. Programs/projects are implemented only as funds are assured. Those not funded in total may be initiated in phases depending on the nature of the program/project or delayed pending hopes for additional funding. The final outcome of all of these efforts for both the "A Budget" and "B" programs/projects may not be known until late in the budget year.

## **III. ASSESSMENT AND FUTURE POSSIBILITIES**

### **A. Contemporary Context**

Many political, social, economic and cultural factors impinge upon the LWF and the member churches. The panel, within its limitations of time, could not attempt to analyze these factors. However, we noted the rapid, sometimes convulsive, social change which pervades the global human community. In many places new waves of nationalism and localisms thwart global perspectives in addressing church and society issues. Worldwide ecological and human rights issues call



for attention on the church's social agenda. Large sectors of the world, geographical, scientific, technological, urban, are at present virtually without any noticeable Christian influence. As a communion of churches with commitment to God's mission, the LWF needs a clear focus on its distinctive role in a global society. **"What can the LWF do most effectively that the churches alone cannot do?"** puts the matter succinctly.

LWF finances have historically been influenced by general political and economic trends. In the early years, US churches covered more than 50% of the LWF budget. The recovery of Germany and the emergence of Scandinavian governmental development agencies with their willingness to support nongovernmental projects have greatly altered this percentage. Today, the churches in Germany provide nearly 41% of the administrative budget. In the coming years, the emerging and struggling European nations in the former Eastern bloc and the unified Germany facing fiscal challenges may affect the churches and their financial support for the LWF. Also, the US economy may adversely affect currency rates. The increasing emphasis on worldwide environmental issues may change the priorities of governmental assistance. There is **little evidence** in the economic climate, whether internationally or within the countries of member churches, that points to the **availability of substantial new financial resources** for church-related projects.

### B. Member Churches

The commitment among member churches to each other, expressed in the declaration that together they are a communion of churches, is a precious asset. Despite considerable diversity in tradition, church life and work, size, geographical location and social context, the churches have remained together even when theological issues of grave importance and LWF administrative matters loomed large. The many opportunities to share a rich reservoir of resources, many of which are not financial, have contributed to building a solid foundation for mutual trust and cooperation.

Both member churches and related agencies with substantial financial resources for sharing with other churches continue to do so. However, these churches face a changing social and economic scene within their own countries. In some regions church members prefer to support local mission activities. Income for the national church may actually be decreasing as is the case in the United States. Member churches are willing to share resources with sister churches globally but the practice persists to share resources directly with these churches. Questions are raised about the cost-efficiency of an international organization when direct communications and personal contacts can usually be made quickly. Because grants from some churches and related agencies require governmental reporting, making such grants through the LWF may seem cumbersome and less satisfying than by direct monitoring. The latter also facilitates "telling the story" to constituencies when funding appeals are made to congregations.

Major supporting churches also have many opportunities to share their resources with other international and regional organizations. The proliferation of church, parachurch, and ecumenical organizations to enable diaconic service and development assistance challenges commitment of resources to any one organization. Some of these organizations are specialized and perceived to be more effective than a multipurpose organization such as the LWF.

Other constraints on providing greater financial support for LWF work relate to several criticisms. Perceived overlapping of programs and services with the WCC and CEC is often voiced.

The panel's assessment is that the financial support for the administrative budget from major contributors will not grow significantly in the coming years due to factors internal to some of the churches, to governmental policies affecting some churches, and to the economic climate within countries. Funding, however, for development projects has some prospects for increasing. The "flow of money" exploratory study, for example, showed the steady increase of funds available from government sources for the churches in Germany and some of the Nordic countries. Nevertheless, these funds can be used only if the projects meet criteria set by the government, the contributing church or related agency, and the member churches requesting assistance.



## C. Planning, Budgeting, Funding

### Planning

The mandate "to review the financial viability of the program and priorities endorsed by the Curitiba Assembly" has been difficult to fulfill. Planning and evaluation processes for programs/projects vary within units of the Secretariat. Criteria have not been adequately developed in all areas for prioritizing projects. Planning lacks coordination with decision-making schedules of churches and related agencies in regard to gaining assurances for financial support. An immediate need is to plan for longer-range programs which can most effectively be done together as a communion of churches.

Initiatives being taken by the LWF to improve planning processes and revise the schedule for budget development and approval are commended. **Ways need to be found to project LWF programs proposals for a multi-year period and to enable supporting churches and agencies to make financial commitments for years, at least two years, and preferably four years.**

### Budgeting

The present system of preparing a Summary of Needs based on administrative costs ("A Budget") and costs for programs and financial assistance requests from member churches for mission, development and communication projects ("B Budget" requests) gives the false impression that a major part of LWF work given to the Secretariat is administration. There is a close interrelationship of staff-related costs funded in the "A Budget" with staff services necessary to carry out and/or facilitate the implementation of programs/projects. In short, staff activities directed at working with the member churches or on their behalf should not be separated from their employment costs.

Programs, however important, cannot be carried out without some staff support and there is no use in having a staff without the financial means to carry out the program responsibilities for which they are appointed.

Another problem is the lack of a clear working definition of "programs" and "projects" which can be used consistently by all departments and offices. Some projects, for example, are in reality programs for churches needing assistance. Clarity in the use of these terms is particularly needed in requesting funds.

The panel has discussed at length a number of options for reconceptualizing what is presently called the Summary of Needs in order to put to rest perennial criticisms. We attempted to think through a core program which would adequately reflect the purpose and functions of the LWF. Our efforts were not as productive as we had hoped for several reasons. Functions stated in the LWF Constitution are very broad. Deciding key tasks which will reflect the distinctive role of the LWF is a major responsibility of the Council in consultation with the member churches and the Secretariat. Also, the present division in the Statement of Needs into "A Budget" and "B" requests is expected to facilitate funding given the variety of criteria used by major supporters.

In the opinion of the panel, the presentation of both program/project needs and administration should be done with greater clarity and differentiation. **The LWF budget should be seen as an integrated budget** with two components. Programs developed and implemented by the Secretariat to serve the member churches would comprise one component. The other component would include all operating costs for staff located in Geneva. All approved project requests would be kept separately (not part of the LWF budget) and designated as requests from the member churches.



### Funding

The income structure described earlier signals the demanding task placed upon the Secretariat to secure funding for programs/projects and administration. Present funding efforts lack coordination and adequate interpretive material. The ability to interpret in an informed way, both the purpose of the LWF as a communion of churches and the programs/projects, services, and administrative support needed to carry out shared responsibilities, is essential. The development of a coordinated plan requires close consultation and cooperation between and among all departments and offices in providing both clear information about needs and reporting mechanisms. The aim is to show both the necessity for support and benefits to be received. Staff visits on a regular schedule in teams or individually are integral to the plan.

### D. Administration and Program Support

#### Reducing Administrative Costs

Costly administration is sometimes asserted as a contributing factor to the financial situation facing the LWF. Three areas frequently targeted for questioning are the location of the Secretariat in Geneva, the salary scale and the number of staff.

**Location of the Secretariat.** The panel does not consider a move from Geneva as a viable option at this time. The international character of Geneva with offices for other world communions and the WCC, the United Nations center and the headquarters or principal offices of international voluntary organizations serving social and humanitarian purposes, is a major asset for LWF work.

In terms of finances, relocation is costly in both human and monetary resources. Any serious consideration of relocation requires extensive investigation of all costs compared with both presumed short and long-term savings. If in future years it is not possible to sustain the financial stability of the LWF through church and related-agency support, exploration of relocation should not be precluded.

**Reduction of Staff-Related Costs.** The assertion is frequently made, although without any reliable and comprehensive data, that LWF salaries are too high, especially as compared to those of the WCC. While it is obvious that a reduction in staff-related costs (salaries and benefits) would mean a reduction in the administrative budget, the panel is in no position to evaluate the fairness and feasibility of this possibility. Such an evaluation can only be made after comparing positions and benefit programs of similar organizations and the cost-of-living in particular locations. The panel did not consider this examination within its mandate. Staff, however, have experienced some of the effects of reduced income by receiving, in 1992, a 2.5% cost-of-living increase compared to the 5.9% cost-of-living increase in the Canton of Geneva.

**Reduction in Number of Staff.** The reduction of Secretariat staff from 125 to 105 positions through restructuring was premised on the assumption that the present work of the Secretariat could still be satisfactorily carried out. Further reduction in staff positions may disregard priorities set by the Curitiba Assembly and require a reduction in programs and services and possible reconfiguration of the Secretariat. While there should always be openness to finding more effective and cost-efficient ways of doing LWF work, a major revision or redirection of responsibilities entrusted to the Secretariat should not be undertaken without extensive consultation with member churches.

#### Membership Contributions

Every member church should be expected to make a membership contribution. These contributions, regardless of their amount, are an expression of mutuality and shared responsibility for the work of the LWF. The panel believes that continuing to increase the requested contributions could



possibly result in some additional income, but would not substantially improve the basic financial condition of the LWF. As previously stated, churches in seven countries already provide on a regular yearly basis approximately 98% of the membership contributions and 97% of the total income for the administrative budget.

Without precluding the necessity to increase requests for membership contributions, **the challenge is for every member church to share its financial resources.** Admonitions and resolutions will not in all likelihood generate additional resources. Intentional efforts through face-to-face visits with church leaders are required to undergird relationships with all member churches and especially those that have made no contribution in the last two to five years. The goal would be to better understand the financial situation in each church and to interpret the work of the LWF.

In some cases, agreement could be reached to increase contributions. In others, such consultation could result in a lower request with the expectation that it would be met. All churches including those that meet or exceed the requested contribution should be regularly encouraged to increase their contribution in proportion to the yearly increase in administrative expenses of the LWF. Churches more richly blessed with material resources have a responsibility to give more generously.

The panel affirms the desire of a number of churches to make contributions, but that are or have been restricted because of non-convertible local currencies or actual lack of financial resources. As a sign of solidarity, these churches are encouraged to provide hospitality for LWF activities and events held locally. Membership contributions can also be made by requesting the LWF Secretariat to deduct such a contribution from an LWF grant to the church.

### General Reserves

Because of the unpredictability of both economic and political factors in a global community, the LWF should maintain a minimum of 25% of annual expenditures in reserves. An annual reserve of 30% is advisable given ever-changing world conditions and the volume of financial transactions.

### Modes of Working Together

Suggestions are sometimes made about the possibility of member churches taking responsibility for some of the tasks given to the Secretariat. Two that have been suggested are delegation of assignments and seconding of staff.

**Delegation of Assignments.** The panel has assessed the pros and cons of delegating certain specific assignments to member churches, their related educational institution and organizations. Assignments carefully described in a **partnership agreement** between the member church, related group or institution and the LWF department or office would provide a valuable service. They also would help to develop a network of groups and individuals directly engaged in LWF activities in a local setting. Normally, the basic requirement should be that all staff-related expenses would be borne by the member church or related institution or agency.

**Seconding of Staff.** The panel explored the possibility of asking member churches to assign staff to carry out certain responsibilities for both the church and the LWF Secretariat. In such arrangements, the usual procedure is for the organization seconding a staff person to assume responsibility for all staff-related costs. **The panel does not believe that this approach serves the best interests of communion.** Member churches which now are unable to provide financial support for LWF work will not likely be able to provide all staff-related costs for seconding a colleague.

### New Sources of Funding

The panel has discovered no new sources of funding but believes two existing sources have possibilities.



## LWF Documentation

The first source relates to member churches that have expressed a desire to support the extensive development work of the LWF. Representatives from these **churches in the South** attending the 1991 Council meeting spoke poignantly of the need to share more directly in the financial support of the LWF. Building on this idea, the panel proposes that procedures be developed to receive contributions from churches for this purpose.

The second source pertains to external organizations which have social and humanitarian purposes but are not related to a member church or related agency. **Foundations** have been asked occasionally for grants to support specific programs or projects following LWF guidelines. While aware of the fear sometimes displayed that the granter will attempt to influence or exercise control over the use of the grant, the panel believes that seeking grants for specific purposes is appropriate and should be tried more frequently providing all federation policies and guidelines are followed.

### E. Ecumenical Cooperation

Criticism from member churches that also are members of the WCC and CEC is frequently directed to presumed overlapping of programs and services and in appeals for funds to meet emergency needs. Questions about the necessity of having two relief and development agencies, LWF World Service and WCC Sharing and Service, that appear to be providing similar services are included in this criticism. These questions presume that increased cooperation with the WCC will save program and administrative costs and at the same time provide comparable services and undergird the ecumenical movement.

### World Council of Churches

An analysis of ecumenical cooperation is integral to the initiatives being taken by the LWF Council in 1991 following the suggestions of the general secretary to propose to the WCC joint exploration of "the possibility of a joint secretariat in Geneva for the ecumenical and confessional organizations." These initiatives led to an exploratory meeting (February 1992) of the staff executives from both organizations. Those present acknowledge the importance of a continuing examination of theological issues related to the confessional character of Christian world communions and the conciliar nature of the ecumenical movement. They identified a wide range of possible arenas for both **closer program and administrative cooperation**, although no conclusions were reached at this meeting.

As follow-up, the important task of critically analyzing connecting points in both the reorganized LWF and WCC structures and accurately identifying overlapping or duplicate programs is underway. This necessary first step is being followed by meetings of LWF and WCC staff with portfolios in similar programs and administrative areas for more intensive exploration of expanded cooperation.

The panel believes that these steps should be aggressively pursued. The end result should be a clear profile of programs and services which call for an ecumenical response and therefore should be WCC work and those which reflect a distinctly confessional point of view and thus an LWF responsibility. In particular instances when agreement is reached that needs and issues should be addressed by both organizations, cooperation and coordination in planning and implementation is essential. The panel believes that designating the LWF or the WCC as the **lead organization** should be exercised as much as is practical. In some instances **new separate entities** may be established taking over tasks that at present are carried out by both organizations. The proposed new **Ecumenical News Service** could be an example of this.

All of these efforts are needed to deal forthrightly with criticism directed at overlapping and duplication of work. Member churches and related agencies which support both organizations deserve accurate information and the opportunity to challenge it as needs arise.

However, in developing a financial strategy the panel believes that because of extensive staff involvement in program development and implementation, significant administrative savings will not



be realized unless responsibility for a program area or service is relinquished and staff reduced. In this regard, the panel sees the possibility of some reduction in staff-related costs in one service area and in several organizational maintenance functions.

First, the panel questions the necessity of having a desk dealing with **emergency needs** in both the LWF and WCC. The possibility of combining these functions into one desk should be explored in terms of effective response to emergency needs and related administrative costs. In a second area, communications, the panel believes that savings could be effected by the LWF contracting with the WCC Office of Publications for **publication services** (editorial, design, distribution, etc.) which has a record of producing quality work. A third area for potential savings is **organizational maintenance** where certain functions such as computer, accounting services, and travel arrangements could be merged.

### Conference of European Churches

The panel notes that initiatives are slowly underway to deal with project requests from member churches presented to both the LWF and the CEC for material assistance particularly in eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. An LWF staff working group in which CEC staff participate is attempting to sort out these requests and to agree on those which should be pursued for funding by the LWF and those by the CEC.

Also steps are being taken to designate programs which are European concerns affecting all churches regardless of confessional background and which therefore should be initiated by the CEC. Programs (consultations, special events, etc.) which call for a distinctive confessional point of view would be carried out by a world communion such as the LWF. Requests from the LWF and CEC for funding are intended to reflect this approach.

Both approaches to dealing with programs and projects in relationship to the CEC have not led to cost savings for the LWF, although increased clarity regarding the distinctive function of each body is still expected. As proposed in increasing cooperation and coordination with the WCC, both approaches should be accelerated.

## IV. TOWARD A NEW FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The most decisive factor in shaping a new financial strategy is the **commitment of the member churches to be a communion of churches**. Communion is both God's gift and task of the member churches. The Council in 1991, in a search for a new way of thinking, deciding and acting together, took several initiatives. It began to explore new and different relationships with other world communions and the WCC and to examine the purpose and model for an Assembly as an effective decision-making vehicle. It also started exploratory conversations about the adequacy of national and regional instrumentalities of the member churches for carrying out LWF work. All of these activities have significant implications for the financial viability of the LWF in the future. Thus the search is urged on and made more complex by the continuing challenge of financial exigencies. The mandate of this panel should be seen in the context of this much broader **search for a new paradigm**.

The clear emphasis on churches in the LWF as restructured calls for an equally clear **emphasis on shared responsibility for mutually committed work**. The "inescapable interdependence and mutuality" of member churches is "to be expressed as member churches freely share, in giving and receiving, their resources." (Report of the Executive Committee on LWF Restructuring, III. Principles for Structure, Para. 17.)

The panel believes that **financial support from the member churches and their related agencies** should continue to be the major source of financial support, with other sources described earlier in



this report being secondary. This does not preclude the possibility of finding ways to increase income from these sources but they should not preempt the responsibility of member churches to share freely their resources as dimensions of their global ministry which can most effectively be carried out through the LWF.

The major aim of the financial strategy is to make **wise and effective stewardship decisions about entrusted resources**. This requires agreement on a program which can be sustained financially. The fundamental principle that the LWF must live within its income is both self-evident **and** difficult to achieve. Unpredictable factors such as sudden drops with little warning in contributions from one or more major supporters after a budget is adopted, and the effects of international market conditions on exchange rates of currencies of major supporters and on short-term investments, seriously affect financial functioning.

The summary of the assessment of increased income in the future has led the panel to *two conclusions*.

*First*, in all likelihood there will not be any significant increase in the funds available for what is presently formulated as the administrative budget or for programs carried out by Secretariat staff; yet we should always be open to graceful surprises. The **historic pattern of giving**, that is, relatively few churches providing the vast majority of contributions whether in response to membership requests or as grants for administration, programs and projects, **is likely to continue**. That is the reality of the situation given the wide range of giving capacities within the churches. Nonetheless, intensive efforts through means which build understanding and relationships are needed to expand the number of contributing churches and related agencies. Communion means challenging each other in love, truth, and trust with each member church taking a searching look at its capacity for providing support consistent with means.

*Second*, there are possibilities in some churches and related agencies for **increasing the funding of development projects** which are either implemented or facilitated by the Department for World Service and the Department for Mission and Development. Recognition must be given, however, to the fact that many of the contributions for these purposes come from government sources and therefore are subject to changing policies and priorities.

Given the reality of these prospects for the immediate future and the **lack of sufficient General Reserves**, the panel has looked for ways to develop a financial strategy which will engage the member churches in a greater "ownership" of mutually committed work which can most effectively be carried out through a Secretariat designed to serve the churches. At the same time, the strategy must promote financial support which allows for continuity in planning and implementation and avoids the continuing use of stopgap measures.

In the expectation that a more complete financial strategy will evolve as **member churches seek a new paradigm for seeking deeper relationships with each other and for working together**, the panel is proposing elements for a new strategy: objectives, profiling LWF work, and planning and commitment.

## Objectives

The objectives for a new strategy can be expressed as follows, that:

1. the LWF, year by year, live within its means despite the unpredictability of income from a variety of sources;
2. the LWF give priority to those responsibilities that most effectively can be fulfilled through the distinctive role of the LWF as a communion of churches;
3. the LWF secure support for its budget through multi-year commitments from supporting churches and related agencies;



4. LWF General Reserves be increased to a level whereby financial obligations can be met in the event of unpredictable circumstances; and
5. the LWF seek cooperation and/or division of labor with other world communions, the WCC and CEC.

### Profiling LWF Work

Clarity is essential for describing mutually committed work, requesting funds, interpreting and reporting to member churches and related agencies. A working definition of "program" and "project" should be developed and used consistently by all departments and offices. The LWF budget should clearly profile what is being done to serve the member churches and be presented with the following components:

- **Programs and services** which, while reflecting Assembly and Council decisions, are designed by all departments and offices, coordinated, and implemented by the Secretariat. Because of the nature of world service programs with field operations, administrative costs for field staff would be considered part of program costs.
- **Basic operating costs** of the LWF which include those for leadership through the Council and Office of the General Secretary, program support (staff-related costs), and organizational maintenance expenses (office expenses, travel, etc.).

**Project requests** for financial assistance from member churches which require LWF staff assistance and which are normally carried out by member churches or under their direction would be listed separately.

### Planning and Commitment

The future financial viability of the LWF depends in part on focused **plans for a multi-year period**. These plans are needed to express the directions and stimuli of an Assembly and the subsequent decisions of the Council and to provide a strong presentation for requesting financial support.

The panel proposes that a planning process begin as soon as possible with each department and office, in view of its particular mandate, to **set forth four-year programs**. Program descriptions should include long-term objectives, yearly activities, plans for increased cooperation and coordination with other world bodies including Christian world communions and the WCC, staffing requirements, time limitations, review and evaluation processes and all estimated costs. All proposals should be reviewed by the cabinet to ensure coordination.

Because of ever-changing needs and crises, it is expected that program proposals when presented for the first time would be as specific as possible for the first two years and more provisional for the latter two years. Each year the proposals would be reviewed by the staff and, in light of program objectives and funding, revised as needed.

Seeking and coordinating commitments from supporters is a key step in the development of a strategy. The panel proposes that at least once during the period between Assemblies a **consultation** be convened **with representation from member churches and related agencies** for such a purpose. The consultation should provide opportunity for openness in discussion, critique, and support for programs which can effectively be done together. The intention is **to gain commitment for financial support for at least two years and preferably four years**. The broadest possible designation of support would be requested with allowances for flexibility in the support of individual programs.



## LWF Documentation

In the year following the consultation, representatives from all major supporting churches and related agencies should be brought together to **review progress** in meeting program objectives and their respective financial commitments. At each of these meetings, commitments should also be made for project requests.

In seeking support for the LWF budget, contributors to programs and projects would be expected **to support related operating costs**. Related agencies could, for example, make a lump sum grant for these costs. Or, if they prefer, the related agencies could pay approximate percentages of operating costs needed to carry out programs or projects.

The first consultation to prepare for the remaining years before the next Assembly should be held in time to prepare the 1994 budget. With the known commitment for the two years and a yearly review, staff would be expected to revise program proposals and costs in accordance with income estimates keeping in mind the necessity for setting priorities.

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the foregoing discussion, the panel **RECOMMENDS** the following, that:

1. "Toward a New Financial Strategy" described in this report be approved in principle for implementation;
2. the general secretary, during the first half of 1993, convene representatives from the Council, member churches and related agencies to discuss with Secretariat staff, projected plans for 1994 - 1997 with a goal of obtaining and coordinating financial commitments for these plans for at least two and preferably four years;
3. the general secretary provide adequate time within the planned 1994 Church Leaders Consultation to brief them on LWF projected budget plans for 1994 - 1997;
4. in order to improve interpretation of LWF life and work, and to intensify efforts to support this work, the general secretary in consultation with the cabinet:
  - devise a coordinated plan for regular staff visitation to member churches and related agencies for these purposes, giving attention to the importance of membership contributions;
  - establish procedures to encourage and facilitate member churches who have not done so, to contribute to development projects;
  - develop methods with appropriate media resources to assist member churches in educating their members in regard to the global ministry of the LWF;
  - provide encouragement to member churches to designate an "LWF Sunday" for congregational prayer, thanksgiving and special offering.
5. The general secretary in consultation with the cabinet accelerate efforts to increase cooperation with the WCC and CEC with a view to:
  - examining the theological and operating principles of perceived overlapping and duplicative programs and services such as communications, international affairs, human rights, women's concerns, emergency, refugee, and development services, education and interfaith dialogue, and take corrective measures such as:



- coordinating programs and services where ecumenical and confessional perspectives are needed;
  - eliminating overlapping programs and services which do not require the participation of a confessional communion on behalf of its members;
  - designating, where appropriate, one organization as the lead organization;
  - exploring the cost effectiveness of having LWF Publication Services provided by the WCC;
  - agreeing on cost-effective ways to carry out specified administrative functions related to organizational maintenance (e.g. travel, meeting arrangements, accounting functions, etc.).
6. In providing staff services in the Secretariat to serve member churches, the general secretary encourage the use of partnership agreements with member churches, related educational institutions, institutes and agencies to undertake specific assignments for the LWF with the provision that all operating costs will normally be borne by the group undertaking the assignment;
  7. the general secretary in consultation with the cabinet propose a plan for Council consideration of increasing LWF General Reserves;
  8. all churches and related agencies supporting programs and projects be encouraged to make contributions toward LWF operating costs.



## INTRODUCTION

The theme of this year's Council Seminar, "Justice and Humanitarian Aid and Development," is of vital interest and importance to the work of the Lutheran World Federation. Based on our experience in the Department for World Service - particularly during the last decade - humanitarian aid can no longer be provided without a concern for human rights.

*Dr. Brian W. Neldner, director  
LWF Department for World Service  
Geneva*

Discussions about justice and human rights as related to humanitarian aid and development are nothing new. However, within the past few years global political and social transformations have taken place to the extent that it now seems possible to move the emphasis of these conversations from theory to practice.

More and more aid agencies, both in the North and South, are beginning to understand that the success or failure of development/aid programs very much depends on local participation, and local participation best occurs when people know their rights and when others respect those rights. In short, when justice and human rights concerns are clearly articulated as project goals, participatory local structures will be created and people will be empowered to take control of their lives and their futures. As a result development will be sustainable.

At the 1991 LWF Council meeting in Chicago, the theme of "Justice and Humanitarian Aid and Development" was suggested as the seminar theme for the 1992 meeting. The task of preparing the seminar was coordinated by the deputy general secretary and carried out by the Department for World Service with support from the Office of the Assistant General Secretary for International Affairs and Human Rights.

Following the seminar, the Program Committee for World Service and the Standing Committee for International Affairs and Human Rights held two joint sessions to formulate proposals for the Council's consideration. Input was also provided by the Program Committee for Mission and Development.

The attached documents form the basis for further work through the newly established Office for Research and Development Education in the Department for World Service. What is specifically requested from this office is to discover methods and mechanisms to practically include concern for justice and human rights in development planning, monitoring, and evaluation. This task will obviously involve LWF departments, member churches, and related agencies.

It is foreseen that an interim report, indicating progress made, will be available for the meeting of Lutheran Church leaders scheduled in conjunction with the 1994 Council meeting.



## JUSTICE IN HUMANITARIAN AID AND DEVELOPMENT

*Keynote address by Dr. M. M. Thomas, India*

### I.

I am deeply conscious of the honor the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has done to me by inviting me to initiate the discussion at this LWF meeting on "Justice in Humanitarian Aid and Development." I thank the organizers for their kind invitation.

Ever since 1947 when I wrote for the 1948 World Council of Churches (WCC) Amsterdam Assembly preparatory study volume, *The Church and the Disorder of Society*, a paper on "The Situation in Asia," I have been associated with the WCC and secondarily with other organs of the ecumenical movement, especially in their study of questions of social ethics in the modern technological age. All through the years till 1983 when all my official connections with the WCC were terminated, the relation between service, development and justice has been a constant topic of debate in which I also was involved. Because the largest amount of money spent by the ecumenical organizations was for inter-church aid for service and development and because changes in the theology of society, in the world situation and in the ideologies and moods of donors and recipients often were taking place, there were frequent calls to rethink the goals and to restructure the procedure of aid programs. I am therefore happy to have another opportunity to participate in a discussion on the relation between faith, justice and humanitarian developmental assistance in 1992.

In what I say today initiating the discussion, I shall reflect not only on my earlier participation in ecumenical discussions but also on my association with the social action/reflection groups in India and my more recent experience of relating myself to a tribal people, the Nagas in northeast India, during my two years stay in Nagaland.

My main thesis in this address is this: It was in 1970 that an Indian economist, S. L. Parmar, speaking at the WCC Montreux Conference on Ecumenical Assistance to Development Projects, said that social justice should be the overarching goal of development. During the two decades of development work around the world we have come to realize several dimensions of justice with which development programs should be concerned. And today justice with these many dimensions should become the starting point, content and goal of the churches' involvement in humanitarian assistance and development.

My idea is to look at the history of the ecumenical debates through the years to show the growing content in the concept of justice, and reflect on what it means for us today.

In parenthesis, I must say that I am speaking primarily about the history of the debates within the framework of the WCC. I hope you will forgive me if I am unable to highlight the special nuances of the same debates in the LWF. But as the LWF was involved in the WCC at all stages, I hope you will recognize some angles of the LWF debates in my historical sketch.

### II.

I remember the earlier stage which emphasized relief and rehabilitation of victims of war and natural calamities like flood, drought and earthquake, and charitable service to the handicapped in society. It was no doubt based on the humanitarian motive of compassion, but one which was increasingly becoming inclusive of all humanity transcending allies and enemies in war and transcending other divisions of the world like religions, nations, continents and races. In that sense, just as the churches were beginning to rediscover the universality of the church through ecumenism, they were also beginning to rediscover the unity of humankind through an inclusive humanitarianism. This practical affirmation of common humanity across divisions and conflicts is something which, as in the Good Samaritan story, has a real element of doing justice to all humanity as created in



God's image and as brothers/sisters for whom Christ died. In political history this kind of reverence of human being *per se* is often aired as ideas of universal human rights but hardly practiced, especially in times of conflict. And therefore, like Mother Teresa's care for the poor dying in the streets of Calcutta, the preparedness of aid agencies to rush to places where famine, disease and other tragedies become killers, as well as enabling the promotion of diakonia to the disabled, the old and the infirm, is a much needed witness to the universal dignity of all human beings irrespective of their standing or utility. This affirmation of the unity of humankind and the universality of human rights is important in our age of development aid too, because there is talk even in Christian circles of boat ethics, that is, of throwing into the sea in times of crisis some sections of the poor and some poor societies of the world who cannot catch up with the rest. Universality is a vital element in any concept of justice.

Of course, in the history of ecumenical thinking, there was a call to shift emphasis from relief of victims and diakonia to the handicapped to creation of conditions of social welfare through promotion of world development. The call at the 1961 WCC New Delhi Assembly from Masao Tak-enaka, a theological ethicist from Japan, to the ecumenical movement was to move from what he called "charitable diakonia" to "social diakonia"; and at the 1968 WCC Uppsala Assembly, taking the cue from the 1966 World Conference on Church and Society, the emphasis was on churches' participation in world development, with special reference to Third World societies and the liquidation of pockets of world poverty.

It was at the 1970 Montreux Conference convened to consider the philosophy and modalities of the churches' participation in world development, that the decision was taken that, since development should aim primarily at the liquidation of mass poverty in the world, the order of priorities, *viz.*, economic growth, self-reliance and social justice, characteristic of the classical pattern of development, had to be reversed so that the order should be social justice, self-reliance and economic growth. It was Montreux that defined justice as structural transformation of society[, and] to provide the human right to life and welfare to the poorer societies and to the poor in all societies as the goal of the church's inter-church and international assistance.

I notice that the Indian economist, Dr. K. Rajaratnam, in his contribution to the National Council of Churches' publication in 1987 wrote to reaffirm the same line of thought about the logic and inevitability of a shift from relief to justice. To quote:

The quantum jump needed is ideological commitment to boldly challenge the cause of poverty more than the consequences of poverty. While the wounded in the battle are attended to, and they must be attended to, we need to stop the war itself and ensure peace.

He has reiterated this line of argument in his paper presented in Norway in 1991--how humanitarian assistance inevitably leads to promotion of developmental justice as the content and goal of the church's participation in the development process. Now back to the seventies.

After 1970, by the time of the 1975 WCC Nairobi Assembly, it was clear that the "development decades" were not making any dent on world poverty. The fact was that the development process in the Third World was accompanied by the creation of more poverty and unemployment. So Nairobi undertook an analysis of the power relations behind the development complex and saw that, both internationally and nationally, poverty and affluence belonged together as one system creating each other and keeping the poor marginalized in the power structure.

Therefore, not only to fight poverty but to enhance the dignity of their personhood, it is necessary for the poor to struggle to secure the right to participate in the decision-making processes which affect their lives. Thus justice got expanded to include people's right to be the subjects of their own development rather than remain passive objects of welfare. It led Nairobi to advocate that development assistance should be directed to social action programs in which there is a central place for some organization of the poor building the awareness of their own situation and struggling to change it through self-reliance.



In the 1987 WCC Escorial Consultation, reported in *Sharing Life in the Worldwide Community* (Hamburg 1990), there was a speech on resource sharing, "Perspective of the Grassroot Churches," by Sithembiso Nyoni of Zimbabwe. In it she asks the question, whether we know of any people who have developed through foreign aid and projects alone? And she answers it herself: "I do not know of any." She adds: "A people is able to develop when they, even if they be the poorest of the poor like the miners in South Africa, acquire a certain level of awareness and ability to mobilize their inward and local resources, their capacities to plan together, to act and to create a new society for themselves"; that, therefore, resource-sharing should be such as to "enable us to engage in the process of awareness building and mobilize our people for development and change" (p.7).

Thus development oriented to justice gets linked to education of the affluent and the poor, regarding the power situations which cause affluence and poverty. It also gets linked to some form of collective action which clearly has a power-political dimension in both developed and developing societies. Further, the base of operation moves out of the circle of any one Christian denomination or even of the Christian community, because collective action in religiously pluralistic developing societies, like that of Asia, tends to take on a more or less secular character.

There have been formed several networks of social action groups based on the above insights. The dimension of politics for change in the power structure of society and the moving out from the religious to the secular circle in the ideology of social action groups have produced the tensions and problems which Jørgen Lissner's *The Politics of Altruism* (LWF Department of Studies, 1977) analyses so clearly. In the North the fund-contributing public and governments and the authorities of the churches have the general opinion that humanitarian service and politics of change are poles apart and should remain so; and that diaconic aid agencies should therefore be politically neutral in the sense that they should work within the ideological framework of the "Establishment" and not rock the boat. I must add here that not only in the richer societies but in the poorer societies, too, authorities of churches and governments have been suspicious of the social action groups which affirm their independent lines of program of organizing the weaker sections of society to demand justice. In fact, in India in the late seventies if I remember correctly, church leaders forced a social action network working under the auspices of the National Christian Council to move out of that framework, partly, I suspect, out of fear of politics and partly because of the fear of church authorities losing control of money, coming from churches outside for development purposes. Further, probably you already know that all voluntary groups getting money from outside India have to get their registration from the Government of India and have to prove that the money received has been spent for development programs along the nonpolitical lines approved by the government.

In this context in which the social action groups are viewed negatively in the North and the South by churches, governments and the public, we have to ask several questions. How far should development policies in the North have to be based on fund-raising patterns and the local NGO culture? Is the growing NGO dependence on national government resources and the resultant desire toward bilateralism and also the urge to keep the control of money and program at both ends in church denomination's hands, adversely affecting development priorities? The fundamental question is: Are Christians in the North and the South really serious about exploring the power-structural causes of persisting poverty in the Two-Thirds World and pockets of it even in the richer one-third, and contributing to their removal? It would indeed be tragic if development programs under Christian auspices lose the justice content and compel social activists to depend entirely on political parties or governments for resources. The alternative is for ecumenical organizations to undertake a vigorous program of education of their basic supporters regarding the relation of justice to power.

Let me add here that I think the ideological stance of the social action groups is also partly to blame for the tensions referred to here. My generation worked mostly with Reinhold Niebuhr's theology of Christian Realism which in politics (that is, collective action) distinguished clearly between the relative justice possible now and the ultimate love ideal which judges every relative justice as imperfect, but also penetrates it. "Eschatological Realism" which was offered as the theology of social ethics at the WCC Canberra Assembly in 1991 gives the impression of making the ultimate love the realizable constituent of politics. There is criticism that, thus, utopianism was introduced into the politics of social liberation. It has led to an attitude of refusing the goal of



"tolerable justice." based on study of the imperfect realities of a situation and through compromises with them, which alone political processes offer. Probably this critique of mine may sound like the nostalgia of the older generation, but even so it may be worth discussing within the LWF the relation between the calculation of the future from a rational observation of the realities of the present, and the realities of the ultimate future which faith sees as present, in any Christian social ethic of realism.

Indeed, calculating the future prospect from the realities of the present in 1992, there is less possibility of achieving the liquidation of poverty in two-thirds of the population of the world than ever before. The breakdown of the socialist regimes of eastern Europe and the reassertion of the market-dictated growth-oriented economy as the only path of development, the debt services from the Third World to the First canceling or surpassing the reverse flow of aid from the First to the Third World in the New Order and the tying of aid to the global policy of dismantling welfare subsidies for the poor in Third World nations--these and other realities of the present seem to say that justice that can be realized in the near future is going to be less tolerable than before. Of course, so long as the number of people in poverty is increasing, hitting the billion mark at the end of the century, all talk of triumph of the free-market economy remains empty boast. In India where the middle class has risen from a mere 40 million to an estimated 220 million, the marginalized population has risen from 60 million to an alarming 600 million. The domestic imperialist structures created by the Third-World middle classes have become instruments of authoritarianism, monopoly and corruption. And even where democratic polity operates there is a constant threat to it. In such a situation, one hopes that the moral urge in socialism, which is that of social justice, will find new techniques socially more decentralized, and politically more democratic than the ones which broke down and will emerge as a viable alternative to irresponsible individualism. Meanwhile the marginalized people need the space to organize themselves and struggle to secure some welfare measures for a tolerably human life. Probably the struggle for the democratic right to participation in state and society may become more crucial and significant than before. Of course, the social action groups continue to have their role as catalytic agents for people's struggle for democratic participation and social structures of welfare and justice. Only that role needs rethinking. They must be prepared to pay a much higher price too. I think they should get both understanding, fellowship and support from the churches for their work among the unorganized sectors of the marginalized.

### III.

I shall have to speak of one more important stage in the history of the growing ecumenical concept of "justice in development." I refer to the awakening of the nations regarding doing justice to the organic dimension of life in programs of development. Of course, I refer to the question of preserving the bio-eco environment for the production, sustenance and reproduction of life in its interrelatedness in the web of the organism called the universe. This preservation requires resisting the aggressiveness of modern developmental technology. The realization of the technological destruction of the natural environment of life came as a sudden shock with the publication of the *Report of the Club of Rome*; after that, the idea of "sustainable development" enhancing the quality of life, has been part of ecumenical social thinking; and the goal of development was set as a just participatory and sustainable society. But it was the 1979 conference of scientists and technologists (Faith, Science and the Future) meeting at Boston, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, that discussed the question of taming the aggressiveness of the "wolf of technological development" in a comprehensive manner.

Even as early as 1948 the Church and Society section of the WCC Amsterdam Assembly, under the leadership of J. H. Oldham, spoke of the peril of technology producing "mechanization of life," of wasting soil and other natural resources, of undermining the "natural foundations of society in family, neighborhood and craft" and of destroying "the forms of association in which men [and women] can grow most fully as persons."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *The Church and the Disorder of Society*, WCC, SCM Press Ltd., Geneva/London, 1948, Report of Section III, I. p.198.



Here we are talking not just of economic and political justice, but of the goal for which it is the means. We talk of justice which is truly social--that is justice to the organic ties that bind human beings to the world of nature (soil, water and air, oceans, rivers and forests) and also to primordial natural foundations of social living created by the mother tongue, the family, the ethnos, the immediate neighborhood maintained by village economy, religious festivals and the celebration of the cycle of seasons and seasonal labor. This traditional ethos hides a lot of injustice and needs reformation. Nevertheless it gives to human beings the sense of belonging to a people and helps them to grow not as isolated individuals but under some discipline of social responsibility. Here justice in technological development means sensitivity not to destroy but to protect in new more humanized forms these decentralized cells of communal living. It is significant that in contemporary historical events, we see not only the revenge of nature ignored, but also the revival of ethnic identities breaking up the mechanical unities of modern technocracies and authoritarian states. In a recent study of the Nagas of North East India, *The Nagas* by Julian Jacobs (Stuttgart, 1990) the authors point to the "vigorous sense of history and identity" as the basis of their efforts to remold the traditional Naga ethnicity. Justice in development calls for sensitivity to such remolding of traditional identity of peoples rather than its destruction in the name of modernity. In fact modernization without this sensitivity has only brought rootlessness and consequent demoralization.

At this point, I must add that Vandana Shiva in *Staying Alive* (Women, Ecology and Survival in India, New Delhi, 1988), Gabriele Dietrich, Aruna Gnanadason and other theorists of the women's movement in India have been emphasizing the intimate interconnection between modern technology's destruction of ecology and the increasing exploitation in modern India of women and children, Dalits (outcastes), Adivasis (hill tribes or indigenous people) and fisherfolk who live close to nature and whose labors are in harmony with raw nature and its organic processes. Also for this reason, the struggle for the rights of nature and the natural foundations of life and the struggle to liberate "the most exploited sections...of which women anyway form the majority" (Dietrich) are one and the same.

At this level, the concern for justice in development is social and cultural and needs an anthropological perspective which is spiritually sensitive to the inner stirrings of peoples searching for their self-identity in a modern setting. That is why the state, even if it is the welfare state with its coercive mechanical approach, can have only a limited role in this area of cultural justice beyond the political and economic. The prime catalytic agent here has to be nongovernmental agencies which have a wholeness in their approach to the humanum.

In this and in other contexts the role of religions of the people in their renascent forms, including Christianity, in creating an ethos, or civil culture, or secular spirituality to undergird the search for the various dimensions of social justice for our time and the struggle to realize them is indeed crucial.

Especially I would like to emphasize the contribution which the idea and reality of **koinonia** in Christ in the church's sacrament of the Lord's Table and in its congregational life may make to the creation of the idea and reality of a secular **koinonia** in Christ in a religiously pluralistic national and global society.

Humanitarian service, economic and social development, people's participation in collective action, awakening of indigenous people, Dalits and women to self-identity and protection of bio-eco environment of life - all these different aspects of justice point to the community of persons as the social destiny of human beings. Here developmental justice in all its forms could be seen as the foretaste of **koinonia** in one or other aspects of sharing--sharing of Spirit (communion), sharing of social life (community) and sharing of material goods (communism). In that sense, justice is where **koinonia** begins. I was happy to read some of the documents of the LWF Assembly at Curitiba where you have been grappling with the question of eucharistic communion within the church. Can we proceed from there to talk of a secular **koinonia** in Christ, on the basis and fulfillment of justice embracing the whole universe and all who dwell in it; and therefore also as the end result of all our humanitarian assistance and development?



## JUSTICE AS IT PERTAINS TO DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN AID FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE NORTH AS FUNDING PROVIDER

*by Dr. Hans-Otto Hahn, director  
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### Introductory Remarks

Over the years, we had to learn the lesson that whatever we do or support as a funding agency will have a lasting and positive effect on the situation of the poor only if the economic, social, cultural and legal conditions in any given country meet certain minimum requirements. We cannot hope to contribute much toward sustainable development if, for instance, the legal system of a country is corrupted to such an extent that there is hardly any right of appeal against human rights violations. Under such circumstances, we may not be in a position to achieve much development in the sense of institution-building or economic improvements for the poor.

We may, however, still successfully assist people struggling for their human rights, and we have done so in many countries in the past, e.g. in South Africa, Guatemala and El Salvador. In the Philippines, one can safely say it was only possible to topple the Marcos dictatorship because of the constant and faithful support of church-related and secular human rights groups through the international NGO community. Throughout the fourteen years of dictatorship, development efforts were in a way reduced to humanitarian aid and legal assistance. We have come to understand that legal assistance is part and parcel of the overall development effort. The strength and self-confidence people gained in their struggle for justice against military atrocities, administrative malpractices and arbitrary behavior of the bureaucracy are quite apparently a very good foundation for sustainable development efforts.

In my view, development is struggle for justice in whatever sense--economic, social, cultural or legal. Being a church organization, our yardstick as to what justice is stems from our biblical tradition. Of course, this tradition does not provide recipes as to what a just society should look like. Only one thing is for sure: slavery cannot be reconciled with our Christian beliefs.

Today, after the confrontation between the Eastern and Western blocs has come to an end (and quite a number of leading political figures in the western world believe that they are the winners of the cold war), a tendency can be observed to prescribe the Western type of democracy to the rest of the world. In doing so, it is very much overlooked that this may end up in only formally democratic types of governance where the degree of justice still depends on the bargaining power of the citizens.

From our perspective, it would be much wiser not to stress so much the formal existence of, for instance, a multi-party system, but to take the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the yardstick. In addition, the codified second and third generation of human rights need to be considered, with particular emphasis on cultural, economic and women's rights.

Having said all that, I have to add that it would be utter nonsense on our part if we stipulated a kind of human rights or justice conditionality in the way it is propagated by our government at present. Such a conditionality could, for instance, read: "Where there is no justice, there will be no involvement of Bread for the World for development or humanitarian aid." It may be perfectly correct for governments to formulate human rights conditionality for their political dealings with other countries, but for churches and church-related agencies this is not an option.

For example, some years ago, the German government proclaimed that they were siding with the United States in its boycott of Nicaragua because of alleged human rights violations in that country. We were



given to understand that our government would welcome a similar move on the part of the church-related and non-church-related NGOs. In friendly but no uncertain terms, we let them know that we, by no means, intended to follow their example. We were not able to justify the punishment of the poor in Nicaragua because the US and their allies did not like their government. Particularly where justice and human rights are not violated, churches and their agencies have to play a prophetic role.

A question on a quite different level is whether, as a funding agency, we do justice to people approaching us for development and/or humanitarian aid. Certainly, we have not always been impartial, and certainly there may be cases in which our behavior has been arbitrary.

One precaution which we have taken since the very beginning of our work is that we become active on behalf of people in poor countries only upon their request, and it is the subject of a necessary and ongoing debate whether we are able to prevent injustice from creeping into the process of prioritization and/or selection of the requests.

We are aware of one more weakness in our system. There are certainly groups of people in need who are not in a position to articulate their aspirations and write applications to a far-away agency, and therefore they remain unheard of and unnoticed. I believe that this kind of situation has become more rare in recent years because there exist church-related and secular NGOs which act as intermediaries, advocating marginalized peoples' interests, in most of the 130 countries with which we have relations.

**1. How does the "politics of fund raising," increase in earmarked funds and such, affect a funding agency's development policy? To what extent are justice/human rights issues taken into consideration in fund-raising programs and aid requests?**

One should think--at least that appears to have been the assumption of those who prepared this seminar--that issues like justice and human rights affect a funding agency's fund-raising activities and moreover its development policy. As a matter of fact, they do. In the case of Bread for the World, the agency I am representing and the one I am most familiar with, this happened in a rather consequent manner. We were greatly inspired by ecumenical discussions and conferences on human rights issues, and they influenced our efforts to redefine our own involvement in the ongoing fight against poverty in the countries of the South. We wish to play a more credible and meaningful role in that process. In our policy statement *Justice for the Poor*, which our board unanimously adopted in March 1989, we committed ourselves clearly to giving greater attention to human rights--including the protection of social, economic, cultural and political rights. We also decided to more strongly support the projects of our overseas partners--both with respect to disaster relief and helping the poor to help themselves. At the same time we stressed that it is also our responsibility to "bring the call for a more just world economic order to the forefront in our churches and in society," and therefore to intensify our efforts in the fields of "ecumenical learning as a means of raising awareness," "development education," and "active responsibility in society, i.e. advocacy."

In practical terms this means that for many years (and we never concealed this fact from our constituency) our mandate for overseas funding emphasized support of human rights groups, centers where human rights violations are documented and exposed, legal aid to those suffering from human rights violations, the rehabilitation of victims of human rights violations and/or torture, and more.

In asking our donors for unearmarked support for those activities (we collect funds for Bread for the World, we do not single out projects or programs for direct sponsorship) we start educating them about root causes and conflict background so that they also learn about the involvement--and guilt--of international institutions like the IMF, industrial countries, their policies toward the "Third World," affluent lifestyles, and so on.



It has become more and more our "philosophy" that a donation--for any kind of aid/support, even in the case of emergencies--is not an end in itself. It is not the ultimate solution. It must lead to further involvement, insights and even conversion at our end which are preconditions for the ONE WORLD, one more just, more peaceful, and more respectful of nature and humankind.

We have experienced that the constituency is willing to follow us. Maybe by streamlining our image or applying all the tricks taught in special seminars on fund raising and social marketing we could have raised millions of additional deutsche marks. But we do not want to distract from sustainable solutions. Therefore, we do not offer our donors an easy way out by allowing them to merely give alms.

So, in my opinion, all "politics of fund raising" which aim at meaningful contributions to solve the world's problems, should face reality and be very clear as to what our little money can and cannot do. This alone is where our long-term credibility and relevancy lies.

**2. How can an aid agency ascertain real need and the best way to meet that need? For example, what is the response when an agency suspects that development projects are not meeting real need or when a project's results may only perpetuate injustice?**

At first glance, the assessment of real needs is an easy exercise. Some tend to believe that what people need is either expressed by them or is obvious and evident to outside observers. Experience tells us we are well-advised not to rely on our own assessment of people's needs as we see them, but to listen to what people say their needs are and what steps they propose in order to meet them. Even that does not guarantee satisfactory conclusions. The felt and expressed needs of the people are certainly the bench mark from which the dialogue on the most promising approaches begins. Our problem is that the beneficiaries approach us directly in only a small fraction of the cases.

In the majority of cases, we rely on the assessment and interpretation done by intermediary groups acting on behalf of the beneficiaries. Even if the style of needs interpretation is very participatory, there remains room for error and misinterpretation--first on their side and secondly on our side. Sometimes we come across cases where the expressed needs, directly voiced by the people or transmitted by intermediary organizations, do not represent real needs. Occasionally, this also has to do with the ways in which we are perceived. There have been cases where people did not dare to confront us with what they really wanted and instead asked for lower priority assistance.

For example, people may be asking for a health clinic and a school because they think it is exactly that type of operation Bread for the World likes to support. Yet, in the course of dialogue, it is discovered that the actual priorities are clean-water supply, proper sewerage systems, and income-generating measures to earn the money for school fees. Had we followed our initial inclination and provided means for the clinic and the school, we might have eased the situation of the people, yet not met their actual needs.

This very simple example may give you a glimpse of how difficult it is, how many sources of error there are, and how complex and comprehensive approaches are becoming. Nobody can rule out that at a given moment, with all the best intentions in mind, decisions may be taken which in the end turn out to be even detrimental to the people. Given the growing complexity of our work, one can only draw two conclusions:

- We have to intensify the dialogue and allow more time for discussing relevant factors in the project/program preparatory phase.
- Whether we like it or not, we will have to professionalize our approaches, i.e. draw in more competent specialists, ask for advice and cease pretending that we, as generalists, can meet all the prerequisite planning and monitoring requirements. Yet, there is no complete



safeguard against misconceptions. In some cases, intensified planning efforts may result in the replacement of chance by more solid error. Anyway, in the future we will have to foresee more funds, allowing our partners to call for the expertise they may consider to be adequate.

If we suspect that development projects are not meeting real needs or that a project's results may only perpetuate injustice, we normally take quite a long time before interfering. Hasty and quick reactions, on the basis of sometimes rather incomplete information or rumors spread by any interested parties, would be most inappropriate. Basically, we feel that the full responsibility for all programs or projects is on the partner's side, and the partner also has to face the consequences when objectives are not achieved.

This sounds like an easy way out. Yet, we try to seek dialogue on how to alter the approaches in programs or parts of programs which turned out to be counterproductive when compared with initially agreed upon objectives. Sometimes even the objectives need to be questioned, as they may have been overambitious and unrealistic from the onset. We do not have such cases very often, yet whenever we have had to deal with them in the past, the process was very painful and sometimes dragged on for a very long period. Generally, in the end, a kind of reconciliation took place and an agreement was reached to continue collaboration in a different manner.

So far, we have rarely broken relations or discontinued funding because of disagreements on a project's or program's inability to meet objectives or when undesirable side-effects were produced. This is so because it may be very hard to prove that a program or project has been conceived in such a way that real needs are not met and that the perpetuation of injustice ranks high on a hidden agenda. Rapidly worsening socioeconomic conditions quite often worsen a project's performance, and no blame can be put on any of the persons in charge.

However, one has to admit that sometimes we lack the courage to call a spade a spade. This is particularly so when the partner is a church or very closely church related. In these cases, we tend to be very lenient and quite uncritical, stressing the specificities of church-to-church relationships which are of a particular ecclesiastical quality, rather than addressing our mutual problems. Consequently, there may be cases where our position may be understood to be "Right or wrong - my partner!"

I sense that we must revise this attitude if we do not want to be accused of camaraderie or "clientelism." I feel all of us would be well-advised to reconsider what we mean when talking about partnership. Partnership can definitely not be an end in itself, but should be a process of constant critical dialogue which proves its validity on whether our joint "target groups'" needs are met in the best conceivable way. It is exactly on this ground that some people at our end feel the debate on ecumenical sharing of resources so far has been one-sided, as it stressed very much the sharing aspect, and did not mention the stewardship aspect of our relationship.

### **3. How does an aid agency's dependence on government funds positively or negatively affect its overall development policy in terms of justice and human rights?**

As a matter of principle, Christian aid agencies cannot accept government funds with attached strings that may hamper their ability to advocate people's struggle for justice and human rights.

From our German perspective, the question is rather theoretical. I know of no case where our government purposely supported projects or programs which attempted to curtail poor people's emancipatory efforts. It is an altogether different story that a good number of government-sponsored projects have admittedly created unwanted, very real detrimental effects. Whenever we come across such cases, we feel it is our duty to tell our government and plead with them either to stop or alter such programs.



One such program is, for instance, the Narmada Valley Development Project in northern India which is financed by World Bank loans with a lot of German money involved. On the basis of thoroughly compiled research material, we can say that the project is bound to virtually destroy the future of thousands of tribal people, and that it would be irresponsible to continue the project, considering the way it has begun. In this case, like many others before, we will draw our government's and the public's attention to the shortcomings in planning, lack of people's participation, and vested interests which are very likely to cause tremendous hardship, impoverishment and ecological hazards in the name of development.

You all know that Bread for the World does not depend on government funds, but this does not apply to all members of our Protestant "family" of agencies called the Association of the Churches' Development Services (AGKED). This year, one of the "family" members, the Protestant Association for Cooperation in Development (EZE), will handle government funds amounting to approximately DM 180 million. Though their administrative budget is covered by financial sources other than government, one could well speak about dependency on government funds.

From the onset of EZE, however, there has been an agreement which limits to an absolute minimum. Yet, this is not an absolute protection against recurrent temptations on the part of the government or German Embassy personnel in Third World countries to intervene and try to influence the course of EZE-funded programs or projects in such a way that they fit better into the government's policy. So far, I should say the EZE has bravely defended their cause whenever it was deemed necessary.

Without any need to exaggerate, the present relationship with the government can now be described as one of mutual trust and respect in spite of considerable differences in policies. On the part of the government, it is apparently understood that when accepting public funds, the churches cannot accept conditions which are highly influenced by ideological or political considerations. Our commitment is more long-term, and we need to be reliable partners who are not susceptible to whatever new fashions or interpretations of development policy may be dictated by our country's political algebra.

As I said, we formed a "family" of agencies many years ago in which we closely coordinate our operations. We have three sources of funding, of which only one involves public funds. To keep our independence, we have informally agreed in the AGKED that the proportion of government funding to finance our joint operations should never exceed 50 percent. In such a way, we hope to keep our independence and safeguard sufficient room to maneuver in such cases where conflicting opinions between us and the government cannot be overcome.

One such example is the support of programs and projects in the three Indochinese countries to which our government did not release any funds until recently, thus blocking the EZE's involvement. Similarly to the case of Nicaragua that I mentioned before, we decided that Bread for the World should support initiatives in these countries geared to improving the lot of poor people whose right to elect their own government had been denied for many years.

To sum up I should say that, in our case, dependency on government funds has not negatively affected overall development policy. It would, of course, be hypocritical to deny that our country's political climate has not subtly influenced our policies.

On the one hand, we cannot operate in splendid isolation, but have to take public opinion into account. On the other hand, we are part and parcel of public opinion formation by means of development education, advocacy and lobbying. I want to leave the subject with these passing remarks, as it is a debate in itself on how interaction between an agency and the surrounding society works.

As I was also asked to mention the positive aspects that dependency on government funds may have on the policy of an agency, I will make just a few brief remarks.



In our case, what you call dependency provides room for dialogue with government quarters. We are quite well-informed about the government's intentions and priorities and have ample opportunity to discuss and question their approaches at all levels. To do so in a competent way, we are compelled to deal with aspects of development policy--national and international--which otherwise might have long gone out of our focus. For instance, we need to be knowledgeable regarding structural adjustment policies of the IMF, the state of affairs of the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) negotiations and the dealings of the European Community regarding LOME IV - just to name a few. This definitely has helped to keep a broader perspective and avoid the danger of organizational autism.

#### **4. How can an agency's statements on human rights be reconciled with its operational work on the ground?**

When making statements on human rights, we are fully aware that the catalogue on the whole as well as all elements is undividable. Compromising human rights is, as a matter of principle, impossible. As I said before, church agencies have no option but to assist people in need. If the people's human rights are being denied (subtly or overtly violated by those forces in control of political, social, economic or cultural power in the respective countries), whatever aid provided to them should strengthen their capacity to overcome oppression.

I am very much aware of situations where people are in dire need, and relief measures have to be taken very quickly without the benefit of lengthy, philosophical considerations. However, in the course of relief measures (particularly in the phase called "second hour" relief measures), there should be room for reflection on possible effects. There may be circumstances where it is impossible to opt out of the work started because, for instance, it is found that the oppressing forces siphon away what they consider to be their share of relief goods.

I cannot see in what way such illegal actions would compromise or make our statements or policies with regard to human rights appear dishonest. In my opinion, the "point of no return" would be reached if we actively supported malpractices on grounds of short-term tactical gains. So far, I have not come across cases in which our statements on human rights needed reconciliation with the operational work supported on the ground. Of course, there are always some fabulous prophets *ex eventu* blaming us for having known before that some of our partners' actions could be turned against the genuine interests of the poor.

We were blamed for having prolonged civil wars because we reduced the political pressure on the warring parties by feeding the people. I consider this a very malicious, unchristian and inhuman line of argumentation. Our task is assisting the poor in their struggle for justice. We are not military strategists, neither are we playing chess. Therefore, we cannot stay out of situations where people's lives are at risk, arguing that if only enough pressure under the lid is allowed to build up, people automatically will set things in line again. Perhaps more could be done to increase transparency with regard to our intentions, activities and the reasoning behind such activities. There is of course no panacea against malicious sensationalism and misinterpretations. Let's face it!

#### **5. How does "being rich" affect a funding agency's decision making and its overall relationship with those requesting funds? How does a church-related agency deal with its "richness"? Is there (should there be) a difference between how a church-related agency and a secular one reacts?**

How do you define "richness"? No doubt, most of us in the North have more in terms of Gross National Product per capita than the average person in southern countries. The poorest of the poor in the South are worse off than the poorest in what we call a welfare state like the Federal Republic of



Germany. And some UN reports, like the new one of UNDP (United Nations Development Program) on *Human Development 1992*, clearly show that disparities between the very poor and the very rich are scandalous--and are becoming more and more so. But this is also true in countries we count among the poorer or the very poor, the LLDCs (least developed countries)!

Let me tell you one thing: Only very few of the donors of Bread for the World are among the rich or the very rich. You may know better than I do to which sections of the so-called Third World countries the donations go. Hopefully most of them are reaching the poorest of the poor.

But I am sure that those we are dealing with at the receiving end are only rarely the poor themselves; they are what we call our partners. We respect them, sometimes admire them for their knowledge, for their courage, and for their inspiration and motivation. We need them and their "richnesses." And so we deal with those who request funds from us on an equal basis. We share what we have. But what we expect, and what is neglected at times, is stewardship. Responsibility is a two-way track. Sharing and stewardship are both sides of the same coin.



## THE PRESENCE OR ABSENCE OF JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS IN DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN AID PROGRAMS

*by Dr. Margaretha Ringström, director  
Church of Sweden Aid*

Justice is a reasonable demand  
between brothers and sisters  
that you will agree

Justice is a reasonable demand  
between fellow countrymen  
that you will probably agree

Justice is a reasonable demand  
between all human beings  
that you may agree, perhaps

Or  
where do you draw the line  
when it comes to justice?  
Along the Baltic or  
the Mediterranean or  
the Indian Ocean?

If justice is a reasonable demand  
between human beings  
are you prepared for reasonable demands  
upon yourself?

Are you prepared to  
give up things you do not need?

Where the earth is exploited for cash crops  
the people's food could grow  
Where those crops add to our overabundance  
the growers could nourish themselves

If justice is a reasonable demand  
between human beings.

(A personal interpretation of a poem by Ingrid Sjöstrand, a Swedish poet)

### I.

To me justice is not optional. You cannot add a human rights or justice component to development aid or humanitarian aid. It is--or it should be--the starting point, the motivation for us to be involved in aid. It is also both the means and the goal: namely to contribute to a world where justice reigns. Thus I usually state that our goal as aid agencies should be to make ourselves unnecessary.

### II.

My point of departure is that there is a great need for self-criticism and reconsideration among us as providers of funds. I have noticed that the word "donors" is not used and I am happy about that. Personally, I have great difficulty in identifying with that concept. In a world where we know very well that the flow of resources goes from South to North, to be called a "donor" is a distortion of truth and thus embarrassing, and even worse is to be treated like a donor. In Sweden we sometimes say: "Stop the aid to Sweden" and "The world cannot afford Sweden."

We should also be very self-critical about our inclination to formulate beautiful policies and ideologies for development and development cooperation, and about our reluctance to really try to find concrete ways of making those policies a reality. Dr. Thomas has clearly pointed to the fact that we have enough theories about development in the ecumenical movement. Somebody once said, "We know too much, but we are convinced of too little." That means we are very good at lip service.



It is also distressing to see how easily we adopt the different fashions of thinking and trends in development cooperation that prevail in the international secular community, and, as we know, fashions are changing rather fast. Isn't it embarrassing that we in the churches, who believe that all human beings are created in the image of God, were not the first ones to talk about "development with a human face" or to stress the importance of women in development? Isn't it embarrassing that, based on our theology of creation, the environmental concern in development wasn't pushed from our side first? And isn't it embarrassing that the concern for human rights in connection with humanitarian and development aid wasn't first introduced and interpreted by us as Christians?

This adjustment to "development fashions" is even more serious because we cause our partners trouble by constantly changing our policies. For some years women were our concern, some years later the environment, and currently human rights. What next? We often talk about the need for a holistic perspective, but have great difficulty putting it into practice.

### III.

I want to concentrate on some perspectives and ideas of what we, as aid agencies, should do instead of what we are doing. We need to discover new ways of working because most of the old models have failed.

There is no greater challenge for people on earth today than that of changing South-North relations; a challenge to global humanity nearing the end of the twentieth century that raises the fundamental question: Does humanity lie at the heart of human action?

This is a quotation from the paper "Global Solidarity for the Future South-North Relationships" that my good friend Lawrence Surendra has prepared for this occasion. I could even add the question: "Does humanity lie at the heart of church action, at the heart of our action today?"

I share Lawrence's view and I am sure many of us do, but who will contribute to this change if we don't--we as churches in a worldwide communion, and we as church-related agencies committed to international development cooperation, confessing that the aim is equality and justice?

We know very well that the poverty and injustice of this world can never be eliminated by aid projects, and to continue to act as if they will, is to ignore the structures or mechanisms that enrich some and impoverish others. But we must admit that, in reality, we seldom get beyond the charity syndrome to real justice.

If our churches in the North want to attack the root causes we have to act in our own countries to change attitudes and policies. A program for action and change at home has to be part of our confession. We have to be liberated from a subtle system, loaded in our favor, which makes us accomplices.

### IV.

As part of our Swedish Lutheran church, my organization, the Church of Sweden Aid/Lutherhjälpen, together with our sister organization the Church of Sweden Mission (CSM), has realized that we have an important role to play in challenging our own church from within.

Our church is a rich church in a rich country, but it almost totally relies on its voluntarily funded organizations concerning international responsibility. We have started to question how our church uses its assets. The total annual financial resources of the Church of Sweden amount to more than 10 billion Swedish krona (approximately US \$2 billion).

Through fund raising in my agency and the CSM, we collect a little more than 1% of that amount through church collections. We also get individual donations, not necessarily from church people, of



about the same amount. If we use only the money we get through the church, it means that the church gives 1% of its budget to international cooperation and solidarity while 99% is used domestically. The present strategies for financial management within the Church of Sweden imply that the accumulated wealth--consisting of investments in banks, companies, and the official sector--is working for our own benefit. It is a fact that today Sweden's banks earn the same amount from church investments as the total amount of international aid given by the Church of Sweden.

May I tell you about a development project in Sweden? We are involved in many projects in the South, but I think we in the North need some too. Our project is called "Global Economy." To our surprise the Swedish International Development Association accepted our application. It is, of course, a test case. Together with the CSM we have been able to employ three persons: one project leader with long experience in Africa and two economists. The first economist's task is to educate parish councils and financial people, treasurers etc., about the global economy; the second visits high-school economics classes to try to educate students on global economy. As you know most of our economists have a very reduced world map where one finds only Europe, the United States and Japan. We want them to have a world map.

By using the systems and structures for economy and trade that are available, we are all part of a global system that is disadvantageous to the poor. By taking part in and using these systems, it might well be that my church hinders the poor more than it supports them. The church has to be the salt of the earth, not a mirror of it. The church has to be on the side of the poor because the Kingdom belongs to them.

At the end of May more than 800 of our volunteer workers were gathered at a meeting where these issues were discussed. In a statement they said:

Each of us supports the efforts made by our voluntary church agencies. We know that their achievements are important--but it is not enough. Our church is part of our society. It has large assets and a lot of money in bank accounts. But within the church, Third World support is exclusively assigned to the Church of Sweden Aid and the CSM.

There is a strong need for vigorous discussion about how the assets belonging to the church could be used to support the poor. We demand that our church be at the forefront in the struggle for a just world.

## V.

Our churches must also challenge our own governments, banks, and businesses--as well as the international organizations such as the United Nations, World Bank, IMF and others. That is what it means to be involved in "preventive solidarity."

Today this should also be of main concern for an aid agency. My view is that this part of our job is as important as the aid programs in which we are involved. "Preventive solidarity" has to be regarded as development aid--or even more so, perhaps the kind of activity that is true development aid.

This is the most difficult part of it because the task needs courage, knowledge, imagination and real compassion; not least, it needs faith. It is easy to realize how inefficient we are.

I don't have enough time to give examples of how we should work in this field. There are many alternative ways of approaching the power structures, raising questions and supporting those who take great risks by confronting them. That is why Church of Sweden Aid/Lutherhjälpen has decided to support the Bretton Woods Reform Organization and Mr. Davison Buddho who wants to reform the World Bank and IMF systems. After fourteen years of working for the World Bank and IMF, he states: "Enough is enough" in his letter of resignation which was eventually published in book form.



Global cooperation is needed and decision making must be democratized in international institutions dealing with trade, monetary policy and development aid. There is a need for greater transparency in negotiations and agreements between states and aid institutions. Of course an international agency like the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) can play an important role here because one of the advantages of the multilateral system is that together we are strong.

These issues will also be part of the seminar titled "First World Ethics and Third World Economics: Christian Responsibility in a World of Plenty and Poverty" that we will hold in Sweden next year. We are inviting outstanding international economists and theologians involved in global issues such as: the debt crisis and its impact on the poor, the new global agenda spearheaded by the IMF, and ecology and development issues not tackled at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. The target groups are church leaders, Swedish politicians, decision-makers, and economists.

## VI.

Finally, I have to approach the concept of human rights which is primarily a matter of ethics. When we take the side of the oppressed it means humanization for all of us.

A development policy that doesn't take human rights into account contributes, of course, to social, political and other conflicts. The connection between development aid and human rights has to be addressed; and cannot be discussed, as is usually the case, only in relation to the so-called "recipients" while leaving out the so-called "donors." Human rights are universal.

We usually make no distinction between human rights violations and the lack in observance of them, but little assistance is provided toward improvement thereof. We, in the North, seem to be interested in human rights in the South--as long as they don't cost much. But human rights are not free. Civil, political, economic, and social rights need political will and investment from both sides.

Development aid has to be based on the right of the people concerned to determine their needs and to assist in meeting them. Therefore, human rights concerns have to be incorporated in development aid to prevent them from becoming part of the problem they purport to solve.

The trend toward using human rights as a weapon is quite worrying. Human rights are at the center of development, but they should not be used in a simplistic, punitive way to impose our ideas and wishes on others. Rather, they should be used in a promotional way.

What is also worrying is the simplified idea of the establishment of democracy as a condition for foreign aid. All experience shows that the democratization process has to be deeply rooted in a political culture of tolerance and in the ability to compromise. For that, a positive social and economic development is needed. If not, democracy can easily be corrupted and lose its legitimacy. And to believe that democracy is achieved only by a multi-party system is obviously naive. However, that does not mean that political pluralism is not important.

What about human rights and humanitarian aid? Katarina Tomasevski, in the book *Development Aid and Human Rights*, has said that aid, when confined to redressing the consequences of civil wars and conflicts--without addressing causes--has proved to be ineffective.

Food aid will never reach all those in need, but peace will benefit everyone.

Of course food delivery is absolutely necessary in many situations, but it is not enough. It must be accompanied by attention to political issues. Giving aid without questioning the oppressing power is to support the oppression. Sometimes, as Dr. Norman Barth of Lutheran World Relief, USA, said in an article about the situation in the Horn of Africa, "tough love" is needed.



Sometimes we think that we have done enough if we give aid to both sides in a conflict, but it is not enough if we want to contribute to reconciliation and peace. We have to use wisdom, energy and money to take part in and support peace initiatives on different levels.

As churches and aid agencies we have so far been much too reluctant, afraid, uninterested or naive to realize our great responsibility in this field. We have been too preoccupied with humanitarian assistance to realize what we have to do. There are great expectations that the church should work for reconciliation because "Peace on Earth" is a central message of the Gospel.

The church can also act rapidly and in an unbureaucratic way. That is why the UN has turned to the churches for help in the Horn of Africa conflicts through The Life and Peace Institute in Uppsala, an international and ecumenical peace research institute, which is action oriented. And we know how important the LWF's human rights work has been in connection with the conflicts in El Salvador and Guatemala.

But how much support--financial and moral--do we give to that kind of work? It isn't as spectacular as Hercules' airlifts of food. How much do we raise funds for human rights initiatives and peace negotiations in our churches and agencies, and how much strength do we put into awareness raising, education and preparation for conflict resolution?

Last year we established an NGO Fund for Human Rights in Sweden. Lutherhjälpen is one of the founders, but I think we should question the fact that the fund relies mainly on government money. It would be disastrous if that were to lead to less activity in the field of human rights in our own organizations. On the contrary we should intensify it.

Peacemaking and conflict resolution or attempts at conflict transformation must be part of our mandates as churches and church-related agencies. I am happy to report that the first training course in the Global Peace Service introduced by the Swedish Ecumenical Council and The Women's Ecumenical Council was conducted in Sweden this summer with participants from South Africa and Sweden.

Let us be more fearless, more forthright and not always use the integrity of a state or a church as an excuse. That is often an easy way out.

We need to have the courage to point out the lack in human rights and justice at the same time as we seek all possible ways to help people survive. We are asked to be peacemakers.

A vision without a task is but a dream,  
A task without a vision is a drudgery,  
A vision with a task can change the world.



## STATEMENT ON JUSTICE IN HUMANITARIAN AID AND DEVELOPMENT

Meeting in Madras, India, 13 - 23 September 1992, the Council of the LWF addressed the theme: "Justice in Humanitarian Aid and Development."

In his opening address to the Council the president, Dr. G. Brakemeier, set out a theological basis, emphasizing the freedom in justification by grace through faith, for consultation on the theme. Dr. M. M. Thomas (India) in his lecture challenged the Council to address the subject on the basis of the Lutheran heritage in an ecumenical context.

Various aspects of the issues involved were set out by several panelists, Dr. Hans-Otto Hahn (Germany), Ms. Edith Mallya Munuo (Tanzania), Dr. Margaretha Ringström (Sweden), and Dr. Victor Westhelle (Brazil) from the vantage point of church agencies in the North and church workers in the South. The Council participants reviewed a number of hypothetical case studies assembled from the LWF's involvement in humanitarian aid and development.

The following statement of general principles for the LWF's understanding of the issue is based on the consensus in the Council that a concern for justice is inherent in the LWF's involvement in humanitarian aid and development assistance.

The LWF Council:

1. firmly believes that the proclamation of the Good News implies a call to take a strong stand for justice and consequently for the promotion of human rights<sup>1</sup>;
2. affirms the centrality of justice in all dimensions of life and therefore requests that all programs and projects planned and carried out by the LWF, its member churches and partners reflect this commitment;
3. recognizes the value of both public statements and raising issues in discussions at various levels, but realizes that long-lasting change comes when communities take responsibility for securing their own rights and shaping their future;
4. calls on its member churches and partners to equip people so that they can identify their needs, develop strategies and find sustainable solutions to their own problems; and
5. requests the LWF Secretariat to initiate a process whereby its units, in consultation with the member churches and church agencies, assess whether and how their projects and programs do or do not promote justice and respect for human rights.

<sup>1</sup> The United Nations considers the International Bill of Human Rights to consist of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (adopted in 1948) and the International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and on Civil and Political Rights and its Optional Protocol (adopted in 1966).



## STATEMENT ON HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION

In the face of grave human suffering caused by war, in which thousands of innocent people are driven from their homes, denied basic nourishment, injured or killed, many of us in the world community are often overcome with a sense of helplessness, particularly when nonviolent means of resolving disputes have yielded no results.

In view of the conflicts presently raging and the potentially explosive situations in the world today:

The LWF Council:

1. Takes note of the recommendations of the UN Secretary-General in his recent report *An Agenda for Peace* for:
  - preventive deployment of UN military, police or civilian personnel (to discourage hostilities, to alleviate suffering or to limit or control violence);
  - the creation of a permanent UN standing force to act as a deterrent to acts of aggression; and
  - the creation of UN peace enforcement units, available on call, to reinforce and strengthen peace-keeping operations.
2. Appeals to the United Nations and its member states, as a matter of priority and based on the above recommendations, to pursue discussions of such international mechanisms for humanitarian intervention; and
3. appeals also to member churches and their agencies to urge their governments to participate actively in these discussions.



## THE CRISIS IN ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT: A CHALLENGE TO THE LWF

Message to the LWF member churches following the Earth Summit of 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED):

1. The Earth Summit of 1992 represents a consensus within the global community that the self-destructive course which humanity has taken in matters of development and environment must be reversed. We could hear in the Rio gathering what the LWF's Eighth Assembly in Curitiba, Brazil (1990) called "a chorus of anguish" created by the ongoing destruction of the environment and by the yet unresolved "tensions between economic growth and ecological sustainability."
2. In spite of widespread agreement about the failure of the major economic systems to spread economic wealth among so-called "developing" societies, it is disappointing to note the lack of political will on the part of many nations to rectify the situation. Yet major commitments were in fact made. Whether they remain empty promises or are turned into meaningful action depends on the response, not only by governments, but also by nongovernmental organizations, including the churches.
3. As a communion of Lutheran churches, we are determined, furthermore, through programs of worship, study, and action, to contribute the gifts and talents entrusted to us, including our confessional heritage, to address the present crisis which threatens the future of the earth and its people.
4. On the basis of the decisions made during the Curitiba Assembly and encouraged by the strong consensus achieved by the global community of nations and nongovernmental organizations at the Earth Summit in June 1992, the LWF makes the following commitments:
  - to encourage the member churches to make use of biblical and other resources which will assist their congregations and communities in developing attitudes and practices which contribute to a just and sustainable world, and to seek out and utilize appropriate technical and other expertise in furtherance of these commitments;
  - to ensure that the work of the Geneva Secretariat and the projects and programs of the LWF use methods and materials which are ecologically sustainable, and to encourage member churches to do the same;
  - to continue LWF involvement in the UNCED process and to encourage the member churches to work ecumenically to monitor governmental compliance with commitments made at the Earth Summit; and
  - to encourage the member churches to value the sustainable ways in which indigenous people live with nature, and to support actions which will bring an end to their oppression and exploitation, taking special note of the United Nations International Year of the World's Indigenous People in 1993.



## STATEMENT ON THE AFRICA DROUGHT

The LWF Council expresses its grave concern about the current drought that is affecting the greater part of eastern and southern Africa. As a result large-scale starvation is threatening the lives of more than 18 million people and negatively affecting the livelihood of many more. This situation requires continued and intensified attention by the whole Lutheran World Federation, churches in the affected areas, and relief and development agencies.

The situation has become even more serious because the attention of the international community and wealthy countries is increasingly drawn to the areas of conflict and unrest in central and eastern Europe. Their response to the cries from Africa has been slow and halfhearted in spite of the scope of the current human tragedy.

The combined actions now necessary by the worldwide Christian community have also to communicate to the world the message that suffering people of every continent are created in God's image and therefore are of equal value and dignity with those who enjoy wealth and prosperity. Africa must not be left alone during this disaster.

### The LWF Council:

- appreciates the support given by its member churches and the supporting agencies to the LWF/WS programs to provide speedy relief and rehabilitation assistance;
- is aware that food distribution alone is not the solution to the recurring problem. What is needed is a wide range of preventive measures and long-term development programs which draw on local and international experience and resources.

### Therefore the LWF Council:

- encourages its member churches in the affected areas to develop long-range plans to counter the effects of drought. Such plans should include development of local early-warning mechanisms, organizing of educational programs aimed at sensitizing and equipping their members, revitalization of traditional crops and methods of food preservation and other survival techniques;
- requests the Department for World Service and partner agencies to continue coordinated efforts to combat the current drought and to assist the member churches of the affected areas to develop preventive measures now, so that the impacts of future droughts can be effectively managed;
- urges all LWF member churches to spread awareness of Africa's role in the world community and its need to come out of a position of social and economic disadvantage.



## RESOLUTION ON AIDS

The LWF Council VOTED:

1. to note with concern that AIDS<sup>2</sup> has evolved into a major health and social problem with millions of victims and continues to worsen (see LWF Documentation 25, September 1988 on "Pastoral Work in Relation to AIDS");
2. to affirm the Christian call, commitment and tradition of caring for the sick and suffering through both pastoral and health-care ministries;
3. to call on its member churches to:
  - offer pastoral, social and health care to the victims of AIDS and their families and teach and reinforce morally responsible behavior; advocate necessary changes in prevailing sexual behavior, practices, and traditions;
  - promote acceptance and support in society of those infected and affected;
  - encourage protection of potential AIDS victims (such as children born to women with AIDS) and care for those who are orphaned as a result of the disease;
  - address directly and seriously any moral dilemmas created by perceived disparities between religious moral teachings on sexual behavior and the advocacy of preventive public-health measures;
  - establish and promote educational programs which increase understanding of how AIDS is contracted, spread, and can be prevented;
  - support and cooperate, as appropriate, with programs established by governments, World Health Organization and other UN agencies, and national and international nongovernmental organizations which aim to combat the spread of AIDS.

<sup>2</sup> Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome



## STATEMENT ON THE BANNING OF LAND MINES

In recent years it has become evident to humanitarian agencies that the use of inhumane weapons, such as land mines, by irregular as well as conventional armed forces has had an increasingly indiscriminate effect, especially after hostilities have ceased. Civilian populations are often those most adversely affected by the presence of mines, booby traps and other hidden devices. Some more prominent examples include Cambodia, Angola, Somalia, Afghanistan and Mozambique.

In 1980 the United Nations adopted a convention on prohibitions or restrictions on the use of certain conventional weapons which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects, commonly known as the "Convention on Inhumane Weapons," and three protocols to it. The convention and its protocols provide for the protection of civilians from attacks by means of incendiary weapons, land mines and booby traps, and prohibit the use of any weapons the primary effect of which is to injure by fragments that cannot be readily detected in the human body. This convention had been ratified by thirty-two countries as of December 1989.

The rules embodied in the convention and its protocols represent a significant step in the development of humanitarian law intended to protect civilians and reduce the suffering of victims of armed conflict. The review mechanism of the convention allows for its extension through future negotiations on additional categories of inhumane and excessively injurious weapons. One area being considered for extension is the possibility of making further categories of weapons the object of specific restrictions.

While the convention and its protocols address the use of inhumane weapons, there is no mechanism yet proposed to tackle the problem of their manufacture.

The LWF Council VOTED:

That the LWF, in coordination with relevant member churches, church-related agencies and other ecumenical agencies

1. work for the further ratification of the convention and its protocols by countries which have not yet done so;
2. promote international discussion and advocacy which would lead to the banning of the manufacture and consequently the use of inhumane weapons, especially land mines.



## **STATEMENT ON 500 YEARS SINCE THE ARRIVAL OF COLUMBUS IN THE AMERICAS**

Five hundred years ago, Europeans arrived in the Americas. The years since then have witnessed the destruction of ancient civilizations, the death of countless individuals, the oppression of many peoples, and the establishment of foreign cultures and economic systems.

Present life in the Americas, as well as in other parts of the world, is shaped by these actions. Although individuals and institutions of today, including the church, are not directly responsible for what occurred in earlier times, they are responsible for ensuring that exploitation and oppression do not continue.

In view of this, the Lutheran World Federation recognizes that 1992 is not a time for celebration but a time for repentance. It therefore:

- laments the invasion and suppression of peoples in lands which were rich in cultures and skills;
- laments that instead of learning from the positive aspects of each others' cultures, peoples were subjected to exploitation and submission;
- laments that the church was often used, and at times acted, in ways to further economic gain rather than the proclamation of the Gospel;
- recognizes the ambiguities that are a part of the foreign settlement of the Americas, finding in this occasion negative, but also positive elements, acknowledging especially the ways in which the authentic liberating Gospel has been proclaimed;
- expresses anguish over those actions which contributed to the oppression of Indians, blacks and people of mixed-heritage, particularly women and children;
- commends the United Nations for having declared 1993 the International Year of the World's Indigenous People and expresses its commitment to seek justice for all peoples and nations of the Americas; and
- expresses its fervent hope that the broken world may experience a growing commitment to seek more just political and economic systems that take into account the integrity of the environment.



## STATEMENT ON 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF LUTHERAN-ROMAN CATHOLIC DIALOGUE

With thanksgiving to God we note that 1992 marks the 25th anniversary of the international dialogue between Roman Catholics and Lutherans. It was the experience of Lutheran observers to the Second Vatican Council working together with their Catholic theological colleagues which led through a series of intermediate steps to the first dialogue session in 1967. Since then the selfless dedication to the task of unity of many gifted theologians both Catholic and Lutheran calls forth our sincere gratitude.

The first phase of dialogue culminated in the *Malta Report* on "The Gospel and the Church" (1972). In the second phase two convergence documents appeared - "The Eucharist" (1980) and "The Ministry in the Church" (1982) - together with two additional documents charting a path toward unity: "Ways to Community" (1981) and "Facing Unity" (1985). The current third phase is devoted to a major paper on salvation and the Church.

Looking back from the perspective of a quarter century we see a decisive improvement in Lutheran-Roman Catholic relations. Through the dialogue a relationship of mutual trust has grown between the Vatican and the Lutheran World Federation and its member churches which has facilitated cooperation on many levels, among them humanitarian aid and efforts toward justice and peace. The LWF has been represented at crucial Roman Catholic synods. The Vatican is regularly represented at meetings of the LWF Council and Assemblies. Annual joint staff meetings between the LWF Secretariat and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity are now taken for granted. Thus the dialogue process itself has been important, resulting not only in theological convergences, but in mutual relationships which would have been unthinkable prior to Vatican II.

In the present phase of theological conversation the concept of *koinonia* or *communio* has a prominent place. From the common foundation of the one baptism, we strive to break down the barriers which prevent that full communion Christ wills for his Church. As Lutherans continue to grow in self-understanding as a global communion, they are also becoming more aware of the larger, more universal dimensions of *koinonia*.

As the LWF president said in his greeting to the Pope last April:

In light of the rich fruits borne by our twenty-five years of dialogue, it is no surprise that the question of reception becomes increasingly urgent. For surely our commitment to the dialogue obligates us to support and encourage the reception process.

Not only must the dialogue documents themselves be received officially, but a climate favorable to ecumenical concerns and progress must also be fostered among all our people.

The joint staff group has already addressed itself to "Strategies for Reception" and is at work on a program for joint Bible study among parish groups. Reception requires nothing less than a new spirituality characterized by ecumenical openness and mutual concern, readiness to change habitual patterns of life and a more profound appreciation of the unity God gives us in Holy Baptism. We pledge ourselves to continue working toward such a new vision of life in communion. At the same time we are painfully aware of a resurgence among both Lutherans and Catholics of theologically defensive attitudes which endanger ecumenical progress by seeking to turn the churches in upon themselves.

We feel constrained to express concern about two recent documents involving the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. One is the first official Roman Catholic response to a bilateral dialogue document, the report of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC I), which we



read as applying a standard of judgment that inappropriately seeks identity in theological formulation rather than unity in faith. That response raises questions for us about official responses to Lutheran-Roman Catholic documents in the future.

Another is the letter of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to all Catholic bishops on "Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion." This letter must concern ecumenical partners even though its intention is to shape Catholic understandings of communion. In a letter to the president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity the general secretary has already indicated some of our theological points of contention. Here we record our disappointment that twenty-five years of ecumenical dialogue with Lutherans and others has not influenced the document's conceptuality. Its impact is all the more painful because it breathes a different spirit from that which we encounter in so many other Lutheran-Roman Catholic relations.

We reaffirm our commitment to continue to work together with the Roman Catholic Church, and we make the words of the general secretary in his report to the Council our own:

It is time to reaffirm our belief that ecumenism is not optional, but essential to the Church. We must not let our vision be darkened by temporary setbacks. Rather with determination we must continue to act and speak in such a way that ecumenical awareness and commitment take root among all believers.

In this spirit, on this 25th anniversary of Catholic-Lutheran dialogue, we recommit ourselves to continue with the Roman Catholic Church on the path to visible unity.















